

# THURSDAY, 26 JULY 2018

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## ESTIMATES—LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE— JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Estimate Committee Members

Mr PS Russo (Chair)  
Mr JP Lister  
Mr SSJ Andrew  
Mr JJ McDonald  
Mrs MF McMahon  
Ms CP McMillan

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### Members in Attendance

Mr JP Bleijie  
Mr DC Janetzki  
Ms SL Bolton  
Mr MC Berkman  
Mr TJ Watts  
Mr LL Millar

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### In Attendance

Hon. YM D'Ath, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice  
Mr J Sullivan, Chief of Staff  
**Department of Justice and Attorney-General**  
Mr D Mackie, Director-General  
Mr G Davis, Chief Financial Officer, Financial Services Branch, Corporate Services  
**Crime and Corruption Commission**  
Mr A MacSporran QC, Chairman  
**Electoral Commission of Queensland**  
Mr P Vidgen, Acting Electoral Commissioner  
**Queensland Family and Child Commission**  
Ms C Vardon, Principal Commissioner  
**Legal Aid Queensland**  
Mr A Reilly, Chief Executive Officer

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**The committee met at 9.00 am.**



**CHAIR:** Good morning. I declare this hearing of estimates for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee open. I would like to introduce the members of the committee. I am Peter Russo, the member for Toohey and chair of the committee. Mr James Lister, the member for Southern Downs, is the deputy chair. The other committee members are Mr Stephen Andrew, member for Mirani; Mr Jim

McDonald, member for Lockyer; Mrs Melissa McMahon, member for Macalister; and Ms Corrine McMillan, member for Mansfield. The committee has granted leave for non-committee members to ask questions at its hearing today and so other members may be present over the course of the proceedings.

Today the committee will consider the Appropriation Bill 2018 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility. I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion as chair or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat. I ask that mobile phones or other electronic devices be turned off or switched to silent mode. I also remind you that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber. The committee will examine the portfolio areas in the following order: Justice and Attorney-General from 9 am to 12.45 pm; Police and Corrective Services from 1.30 pm to 5.15 pm; and Fire and Emergency Services from 6 pm to 7.30 pm.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2018 for the portfolio area of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. The committee will examine the Justice and Attorney-General portfolio until 12.45 pm and will suspend proceedings during this time for a break from 10.30 am to 10.45 am. The visiting members present are Jarrod Bleijie MP, member for Kawana; David Janetzki MP, member for Toowoomba South; and Sandy Bolton MP, member for Noosa.

I remind those present today that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questioning that apply in parliament also apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide the proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the Attorney-General, the director-general, departmental officers and members of the public to the hearing. For the benefit of Hansard I ask departmental officers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Attorney-General or director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of Justice and Attorney-General open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Attorney-General, if you wish you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Good morning and thank you, Mr Chair and fellow committee members and members of parliament, for the opportunity to attend the committee today. This is an important day to reflect on what the Palaszczuk government has delivered for the people of Queensland and to spell out our ongoing commitment to safer communities and providing the services and support Queenslanders need and deserve.

Mr Chair, in my fourth year I can report on a significant record of reform in this portfolio. This is a government committed to respect for all individuals, to openness and integrity in government and to equitable access to justice. We are investing in justice with important initiatives, including strong judicial appointments, investments in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Director of Child Protection Litigation and more specialist domestic and family violence courts. Our commitment to the *Not now, not ever* recommendations has led to more victims coming forward knowing that they will be heard, supported and protected by a range of new services, shelters and laws.

That is also why the Palaszczuk government is now publishing regular court statistics about domestic and family violence, to bring the crime out of the shadows. We hope making this data available publicly will increase victims' faith in the system and we assure them that they will be taken seriously and that offenders will be held to account. Crucially this data is for the first time showing encouraging signs of stabilisation, the first tentative steps towards a long-term cultural change required to tackle domestic and family violence.

The Palaszczuk government has also restored the Drug and Alcohol Court to tackle the underlying causes of criminal behaviour to break the cycle of reoffending. This year's budget also includes funding to make the Murri Court permanent, again another important initiative which has the power to change lives, reduce offending and create safer communities.

Australia's toughest and most effective laws to tackle serious and organised crime are having an impact. Our serious and organised crime regime tackles criminals ranging from child exploitation rings to financial fraudster rackets, outlaw motorcycle gangs and organised drug rings. To enable this further we have boosted the funding to the Crime and Corruption Commission to enhance its information security platform and deliver digital investigative services. We have now also declared 27 bkie groups as identified organisations as we stamp out organised crime, most recently Satudah. I can announce today that, with the Governor's approval, we are declaring another bkie group as an identified organisation, the Mongrel Mob, which is regarded as one of the world's fiercest, and we are determined to stop it establishing a foothold in Queensland. Police have advised that Mongrel Mob members have recently displayed their colours in public in Brisbane, Logan, Rockhampton and the Gold Coast. As a result of our laws police will be able to crack down on the Mongrel Mob before it becomes established in this state.

We are also working to keep our communities safer by tackling alcohol fuelled violence. We want a safe, vibrant night-life in our city centres and that means protecting patrons from dangerous people on banning orders who have no business being inside a licensed venue. Troublemakers are learning to keep away as they will not get in. We will continue to work with industry to ensure the most effective measures to keep Queenslanders safe.

The Queensland Law Reform Commission has provided thoughtful and measured advice on our recent referrals. The Palaszczuk government is committed to informed, effective, evidence based policy, and by acting on the Queensland Law Reform Commission's recommendations in the past year we have passed laws which provide for the expungement of historical homosexual convictions and next month we will introduce a bill to decriminalise the termination of pregnancies. Today I can reveal details of the next body of work: two separate referrals into privacy—, one for general civil surveillance and one pertaining to privacy in the workplace. These terms of reference ask the Queensland Law Reform Commission to investigate ways to ensure our laws keep up with advances in technology such as smart phones, drones fitted with cameras and tracking and surveillance devices.

This past financial year we have witnessed significant milestones in the life of modern Queensland, many of which are reflected in the work of our Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. The five millionth Queenslanders was born this year and we have seen Queenslanders vote resoundingly in favour of marriage equality. The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages now has a significant body of work to ensure our laws remain relevant and in the meantime continues to provide timely, affordable and accessible services that reflect the reality of modern Queensland families.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all those hardworking Queenslanders involved in the delivery of justice services across the state, from the staff at Births, Deaths and Marriages to our local JPs volunteering in the community, from the dedicated front-line workers providing critical support to victims of domestic and family violence to the elders and community justice groups addressing local issues on a local level and the departmental officers working to deliver sound policy and reform. The countless contributions of Department of Justice and Attorney-General staff are invaluable. I am proud to be the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice in the Palaszczuk government. Our record of action and reform is helping to ensure Queensland is a vibrant, inclusive state. We are delivering social and legal reforms that recognise not just our individual rights but also the fact that as a community there is so much more that unites us than divides us.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Attorney. I call on the Deputy Chair, the member for Southern Downs.

**Mr LISTER:** I will refer the first question to the member for Kawana, please.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I call for the chairman of the Crime and Corruption Commission. Whilst the chairman is making his way, I seek leave to table documents relevant to my questions of the chairman.

**CHAIR:** Do you have copies for all the committee members?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Indeed.

**CHAIR:** Can they be provided?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Can the member advise the committee whether or not they contravene the standing orders?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** To my knowledge they do not. They are correspondence between myself and the CCC chair and the Office of the Information Commissioner.

**CHAIR:** Can I also ask for a copy to be given to the Attorney.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Could we also have a copy for the chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission.

**CHAIR:** Certainly, Attorney. Member for Kawana, could you separate them?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I did. I gave the chair three separate bundles, with 10 copies in each bundle.

**Mrs D'ATH:** If I can check, it is three documents?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Correct.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, Mr Chair. Mr Chairman, good morning. You will be aware that I wrote to you, with the tabled documents, on 15 May in relation to a conversation between the member for Bundamba and the Minister for Local Government regarding corruption concerns raised about the Ipswich City Council by the member for Bundamba. During the conversation the member for Bundamba said on multiple occasions that over a number of years complaints had been put not only to the Premier but also to the administrative committee of the Labor Party. There were further allegations, as you will no doubt be aware, in my letter.

I am concerned that I received a letter from the CCC on 16 July, eight weeks after my complaint was lodged, advising me that 'while the matters you have raised, as outlined would, if proved, amount to corrupt conduct, the CCC considers you have not provided any evidence to raise a suspicion that the elements of section 15 ... are satisfied.' Mr Chairman, did the CCC interview the member for Bundamba or the Premier about my complaint?

**Mr MacSporran:** I think the simple answer to that is no, not directly about your complaint, but there have been a lot of media and a lot of statements made about the provenance of complaints made by the member for Bundamba and others. You will recall in the last sittings of parliament, if not the one before, there was a debate involving the Deputy Premier about whether complaints that had been made to her by the member for Bundamba had been forwarded to us or otherwise and there was an error in the number of documentation and complaints as such. However, ultimately we were satisfied, looking at the material you provided, that it did not raise a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct, because it could not be productively investigated and, in any event, we were aware of a number of complaint matters over a number of years that had in fact been provided to us by the government.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr MacSporran, with respect, despite what has happened in the parliament, this was a conversation that took place in the back of parliament that I overheard as a witness. I wrote to the CCC believing I had an obligation. It appears now with your answer that neither the Premier nor the member for Bundamba was even interviewed about my complaint. This applies to any Queenslanders who complain to the CCC if they overhear conversations or if they are a whistleblower: I was not in a position to provide evidence, because I am not the member for Bundamba or the Premier and I did not have access to the administrative files of the Labor Party committee in Labor head office in Peel Street, so how am I able to satisfy the CCC about the corruption? It appears to me that the only way to satisfy that is by putting the Premier, the Labor head office or the member for Bundamba on the stand in the CCC and asking them the question, which appears not to have happened.

**Mr MacSporran:** I think what you have to understand is that our jurisdiction is only invoked when there is a reasonable suspicion that corrupt conduct has occurred. In respect of elected officials in particular, there is an added obligation over and above that simple test, because corrupt conduct in that context means the commission of a criminal offence as opposed to some breach of procedure or some serious disciplinary breach that may result in the dismissal of an employee, for instance, which is otherwise covered by a definition of corrupt conduct. The threshold bar is extremely high.

We do not routinely race off and start an investigation because someone comes forward. You are to be commended, as is every Queenslanders who has concerns about potential corrupt conduct. You are encouraged to come forward and report it. We then have to conduct what we call an assessment to see whether it is possible that threshold is reached. If so, we then commence an investigation and might do things like interview people, use our coercive powers, et cetera. However, the use of our coercive powers—as you say, bringing someone into a hearing and forcing them to answer questions where they do not have the protection of the right to silence—is an extraordinary step to take. We guard jealously the exercise of those powers for good reason. That is why we conduct a proper and thorough assessment.

At the end of the day, the matters that you raise have been in the public arena for years. I am not critical of you bringing them forward. I commend you for doing so. However, at the end of the day, it could not be taken anywhere productively and was largely inconsistent with what we knew to be the case, bearing in mind that we have been investigating Ipswich since October 2016, almost two years.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My point is that you have a member of parliament who has said publicly and then in a private conversation with a minister of the Crown that she was owed an apology; that she told the Premier, both in government and in opposition, about alleged corruption in Ipswich. I overheard the conversation and I wrote to the CCC about it.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Chair, is there a question in this? It seems to be a running commentary now.

**CHAIR:** I ask the member to come back to the question, please.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair—

**CHAIR:** Do not be argumentative.

**Mr LISTER:** I think the member for Kawana is trying to get to the truth of the matter.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Estimates requires putting questions.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, in answer to the Attorney's question, the CCC's responsibilities are investigative activities of the CCC, they are empowered to reduce corruption in Queensland and pursue corruption involving elected officials.

**CHAIR:** I ask the member to get to the question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, Mr Chair. Mr MacSporran, I cannot understand why the CCC has not fully investigated the matter. The person who says she has the evidence is the member for Bundamba.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Point of order.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Why was the member for Bundamba not interviewed?

**CHAIR:** Excuse me, member for Kawana. There is a point of order.

**Ms McMILLAN:** My point of order is that the question was not a question, but a statement.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** With respect, I said, 'Why was the member for Bundamba not interviewed?' That is a question and not a statement, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** The member for Kawana is becoming argumentative. Can you ask your question or I will ask you to move on to the next question?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr MacSporran, in your letter, which I have tabled, you have said that if proved what I have alleged would amount to corruption. You have also said that the absence of suspicion would be an unjustifiable use of the CCC's limited resources. Is it the case that it was because of the CCC's limited resources that this matter was not investigated over an eight-week period?

**Mr MacSporran:** No, not at all. We have adequate resources. Had there been raised a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct that could be productively investigated, we would have investigated it. I have told you why we did not. You beg to differ. You have a different view. You are welcome to that. If you have any further information or legal advice that says that our assessment is incorrect, I welcome you to produce it to me and I will reconsider the matter.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I think the point with my questioning is that I am not the one with the information; it is the member for Bundamba.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I will move on. The member for Bundamba has said publicly that she advised the Premier about potential alleged corruption in Ipswich. Does the Premier have a statutory obligation to notify the CCC of such an allegation?

**Mr MacSporran:** Yes.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Have you received any notification from the Premier about alleged corruption in Ipswich over the years?

**Mr MacSporran:** I cannot tell you definitively about that. I suspect we have. We have certainly received referrals from the Deputy Premier. That was the subject of those debates in parliament recently. I can confirm that because we were asked to check our records so that the Deputy Premier could give an accurate answer in parliament. Those referrals have come our way. Whether that is from the Premier to the Deputy Premier to us, I am not sure. I cannot recall, personally, in the time I have been there, whether we have had a direct referral by the Premier.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr MacSporran, in my letter to you one of the allegations that I raised was the fact that I was told by the member for Bundamba that she had advised the Premier, both in government and in opposition when the now Premier was the opposition leader, of the alleged corruption in Ipswich. I

want to know whether the CCC has referred a direct inquiry complaint from the Premier, either as Premier or when she was opposition leader, about alleged corruption in Ipswich.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, you are becoming argumentative. You have previously asked that question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The chairperson said he is unsure. I am asking the chairperson of the CCC, through you, Mr Chair, that I would like certainty around that. Whether that is the Attorney agreeing to take the question on notice or coming back to this committee with respect to that, I imagine—

**Ms McMILLAN:** Point of order. The question has no relevance to the appropriation bill.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, with all respect, pursuing corruption in Queensland is a—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, I have a point of order. In my view, Mr MacSporran has already answered that question. I ask you to move on to the next question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, with respect, the chairperson of the CCC said he is not sure—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am asking the Attorney-General to take that question on notice on behalf of the CCC chair, so that the CCC chair can fully brief this committee.

**Mrs D'ATH:** In fact, you had not asked that.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I said I was going to and then I was interrupted by the Labor member for a point of order. Attorney, I am asking you, will you take that question on notice on behalf of the CCC chair?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I believe the CCC has answered the question. The CCC—I also agree in relation to the point of order about the relevance to this appropriation bill.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Let the CCC chair speak for himself. You are not taking it on notice; thank you, Attorney. Mr MacSporran, so I can be completely clear—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, I ask you not to put words into the Attorney's mouth, because that is not what I recall the Attorney saying. I have already ruled that the question has been answered adequately by Mr MacSporran. I ask you to move on to your next question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Without putting words in anyone's mouth, Attorney, will you take the question on notice whether the CCC has received a complaint from the Premier, either as Premier or as opposition leader—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, I asked you to move on to your next question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is my next question. This is a yes or no answer. I do not know why we cannot have the CCC come back to the committee. I do not understand—

**Mrs D'ATH:** I have already answered that; because the chair has already given his answer on that question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The chair said he does not know. I want clarification.

**Mr LISTER:** Mr Chair, we have the—

**CHAIR:** One at a time, please. If you have a point of order, call 'point of order'.

**Mr LISTER:** My point of order is this: we have one of the most esteemed public servants in the state here and I do not think he needs to be protected by the Attorney-General or you.

**CHAIR:** That is not a point of order. I ask you to ask your next question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am asking you, Mr Chair, whether or not we are having that matter taken on notice by the Attorney. I have not received a yes or no, Mr Chair. I am asking, through you, is this a question that is now being taken on notice or not?

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

**Mrs D'ATH:** I will take that question on notice. I suspect it will be the same answer that the member has already received, but we will take that on notice.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We got there in the end, thank you very much. Mr MacSporran, I refer to the documents I tabled with respect to the letter that the CCC sent to me on 13 July 2018. Following investigation into the use of a private email account for government business, you labelled the member for Miller, Mark Bailey, very foolish. In fact, I quote media reports of 22 September 2017, in which you said—

It emphasises how foolish the behaviour is to use a private email account and then deactivate it.

Mr Chairman, you will be aware that I wrote to you with concerns over the appointment of Mr Mark Algie to the board of Energy Queensland by the member for Miller in his capacity as minister. The Crime and Corruption Commission responded to my complaint at 4.43 on Friday, 13 July. Subsequent to that, the CCC issued a statement at 5.10 on the same day. I quote—

Following the assessment, the CCC is of the view the processes to identify and nominate candidates for board appointments of Government Owned Corporations lacks transparency and good governance.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, do you have a question?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes, thank you. Mr Chairperson, how did the CCC come to that conclusion and what were your concerns in relation to the government owned corporation appointment process?

**Mr MacSporran:** I think, as we said in that public statement we released last week, there were no guidelines, protocols or benchmarks to compare the process that was involved in Mr Algie's appointment, so that you could determine, as it were, whether there was a departure from it. There appeared to be an EOI process engaged upon that had a fixed term to run, which had expired before the resume of Mr Algie was forwarded by Mr Bailey to the minister's chief of staff. Then, very soon after, that cabinet approved the appointment to the board. Moreover, after the appointment was approved by cabinet, there was due diligence carried out the following day. One would think that would be the wrong order of things. Therefore, whilst there was no corrupt conduct because there was no benchmark to compare it against, the process lacked transparency and accountability, in our view. We have written to the Under Treasurer to ask that that process be reviewed and made more transparent and accountable.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, am I correct in saying that you have just advised the committee that due diligence was undertaken but after the cabinet approval—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, that question has already been answered.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am following up the question, Mr Chair, with respect.

**Mr LISTER:** It has not been answered.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am following up the question. The CCC has just ascertained that due diligence was in fact undertaken after 18 or 19 cabinet ministers sat around a room and approved the appointment. Mr MacSporran, I know you have raised concerns in your press release, issuing a letter back to me, about due diligence checks prior to the cabinet appointment. We have now confirmed that due diligence was not undertaken. Have you received a response from the Under Treasurer with respect to your concerns about the appointment processes?

**Mr MacSporran:** No, we have not yet, but bear in mind that it is a recent correspondence to the Under Treasurer. We are simply waiting for a response. I think the Premier said, I think at these hearings, that she is waiting to have a response and then proposes to put in place the recommended guidelines. That is as I understand her evidence.

**CHAIR:** I ask the member for Macalister for the next question, please.

**Mrs McMAHON:** In relation to page 43 of the SDS and the functions of the Crime and Corruption Commission, can the Attorney-General please advise how the Palaszczuk government is supporting the commission in undertaking its vital work?

**Mrs D'ATH:** The Palaszczuk government continues its strong support of the Crime and Corruption Commission's vital role in safeguarding the integrity and accountability of all public officials and keeping our community safe. The Palaszczuk government has ensured the proper resourcing of the Crime and Corruption Commission so that it remains a responsive, relevant and sustainable organisation in its pursuit of major crime and corruption.

In the past three years the government has provided approximately \$8 million in additional funding to enable the CCC to procure a new investigations case management system, undertake criminal intelligence hearings, provide more financial investigators and improve forensic computing capability, which we know is so critical to the CCC. While the majority of this additional funding is ongoing, I am very pleased that this year we are furthering our commitment by providing the CCC with new funding of approximately \$23 million over the next four years. This will go to recruiting more front-line investigators and enhancing digital evidence and infrastructure.

The government recognises the increasing demand on the CCC's investigative function, particularly in relation to corruption. Over the last few years the CCC's investigation of public sector

corruption has increased by 57 per cent. This includes a marked increase in the number of complaints relating to the public sector, including local government.

The outcomes of investigations like Operation Belcarra are an important step in holding local government to account and provide an opportunity to develop strategies to decrease the corruption risk in the sector. The CCC's Operation Belcarra included 31 recommendations for reform to strengthen integrity and accountability in local governments in Queensland. The government's endorsement of the CCC's Operation Belcarra report reflects the government's commitment to integrity and accountability in local government as well as the broader public sector. As we know, this work is still continuing.

To support the CCC undertaking its vital work in fighting corruption, particularly in local government, the government has provided \$7.4 million over the next four years to provide the resources needed to assist the CCC to investigate corruption in local government. As I stated earlier, this funding will boost the number of front-line corruption investigators and assist the CCC to progress corruption investigations in a much timelier manner. The funding will also assist the CCC to establish an effective human intelligence source capability to combat major crime and corruption.

The government has also provided the CCC with additional funding of \$16.3 million as part of the \$23 million to enhance the processing of digital evidence and intelligence analysis and provide for a secure and contemporary cloud based data platform. I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to have the platform to be able to manage all of that digital evidence and intelligence analysis which is a growing part of criminal and corruption investigations. The new platform will support the core business of crime and corruption investigations. The requirement for ongoing access to very high performing computing and storage systems in investigations is absolutely critical to the CCC and its business.

The Crime and Corruption Commission will benefit from enhanced investigative performance as this new funding will provide a flexible and scaled approach to data storage which reflects the dynamic needs of the CCC. This funding will provide greater flexibility as growth in information assets and data increases, 24/7 digital processing of evidence, increased information asset and data security, high-speed secure communication links and greater access to information systems, voice communications and data from remote locations for field operatives and access to data across multiple platforms to enhance the CCC's analysis capability and assist with the continued increase in complex investigations. As we know, we recently expanded those powers of the CCC through our organised crime legislation in terms of accessing smart phones, tablets, computers and information off the dark web. The government certainly values the important work that the CCC performs.

**CHAIR:** In reference to page 43 of the SDS, can the Attorney-General please update the committee on the operation of the serious and organised crime regime in Queensland?

**Mrs D'ATH:** The Palaszczuk government is very proud of the reforms it has brought in for serious and organised crime. We did the commission of inquiry into organised crime and also established the task force to look at the previous government's organised crime legislation. We believe the organised crime regime that we have implemented is the toughest and most effective in the country now. The government has invested significant funding in tackling the scourge of serious and organised crime in our community.

The regime that we implemented as part of the Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Amendment Act 2016 became fully operational in March 2017. It is a very agile, comprehensive and workable response to confronting all forms of organised crime, whether it be outlaw motorcycle gangs, paedophile networks, drug-trafficking syndicates or sophisticated boiler room frauds. The new regime is working. It has been used to disrupt criminal networks, stop the wearing of outlaw motorcycle gang colours in public, shut down outlaw motorcycle gang clubhouses and seize prohibited items and charge criminals with serious organised crime offences.

I will give you a snapshot of what those offences and charges have been. Offenders have been successfully charged and prosecuted. As at 31 May this year there have been 25 charges of outlaw motorcycle gang colour offences, including 14 convictions; 77 new charges under the amended money-laundering offence, including 11 convictions; 25 charges of fraud, with the new added circumstance of aggravation introduced in response to the increasing prevalence and seriousness of boiler room frauds, including 17 convictions; and 63 charges filed with the new serious organised crime circumstance of aggravation. There have been 800 official warnings issued with the consorting offence as well.

We know that in May Taskforce Maxima used a range of the regime's new powers when they executed a warrant on a premises that was operating as a clubhouse for the Rebels outlaw motorcycle



gang, seizing many prohibited items and also issuing nine public safety orders and official consorting warnings.

In relation to the declaration of new identified organisations, as I said in my opening statement, in June of this year the outlaw motorcycle gang known as Satudarah was declared an identified organisation under the liquor regulation. The Queensland Police Service worked with their counterparts to identify this Dutch organisation and their links to criminal activities in various jurisdictions. This declaration prevents Satudarah members from wearing their colours and limits their ability to intimidate the community and, very importantly, to recruit.

Today I will asking the Governor to declare another organisation, the Mongrel Mob, as an identified organisation. The QPS has reported an increased prevalence of the Mongrel Mob throughout Queensland. Its members in other jurisdictions have been charged and convicted of crimes including murder, wounding, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug and weapon offences and extortion.

Satudarah and the Mongrel Mob will join 26 other entities declared as identified organisations, including the Bandidos, the Finks and the Rebels. The declaration of these organisations is one of the many tools that make up our broader organised crime regime, including the consorting offence; public safety orders; a serious organised crime circumstance of aggravation; organised crime control orders; the banning of the visible carrying or wearing of outlaw motorcycle gang colours in all public places; increased penalties for child sexual exploitation offending, sophisticated financial crimes and drug trafficking; and enhancements to police powers.

**Ms McMILLAN:** In relation to page 43 of SDS, and without compromising any operational sensitivity, could the chairperson of the Crime and Corruption Commission please advise the committee of the activities the Crime and Corruption Commission has undertaken in relation to child exploitation and any emerging challenges and concerns?

**Mr MacSporran:** The CCC focuses on investigating persons using peer-to-peer online networks to access and share child exploitation material. The CCC also undertakes hearings to support QPS paedophilia investigations. In 2017-18 the CCC finalised seven child exploitation material investigations resulting in seven persons being charged with 24 offences including possession, distribution and production of child exploitation material. Some 71 per cent of finalised criminal paedophilia investigations resulted in arrests, charges, seizures or restraint of property. Some 11 children were identified as being at risk in harmful environments. Our priority when we are investigating peer-to-peer networks is to identify targets that have the potential to carry out contact offending. If we identify that, that is a priority for executing search warrants and the like.

The CCC also held hearings to support a QPS investigation of an online sex offender identified by United States authorities and subsequently charged by the QPS with over 800 child exploitation material offences. The offender was to be examined in relation to more than 6,000 additional child contacts, discovered on some of his devices, but was twice certified for contempt after failing to disclose the PIN of his iPhone. He was sentenced to eight months imprisonment for the first contempt but, following the second contempt certification, agreed to be interviewed by the QPS. The matter remains before the court and the QPS investigations are ongoing.

Technology is a significant enabler of child sexual exploitation. Offenders involved in that sort of offending are increasingly using technologies such as live streaming, cloud based services, anonymisation, encryption methods and software-cleansing applications to prevent identification and prosecution. These methods and the use of cryptocurrencies and the dark web are presenting significant challenges for law enforcement efforts to combat criminal paedophilia. The growth in technology enabled crime, including in relation to criminal paedophilia offences, requires specialised knowledge and skills and presents challenges for ensuring CCC investigators are capable and technically equipped to respond.

Commencing this year, as the Attorney has already mentioned, the government has committed to additional funding for the CCC of \$16.3 million over four years to enhance the processing of digital evidence and intelligence analysis and provide for a contemporary information security system. That will inevitably increase our capability in this space, which is a very pleasing result.

The CCC will continue to support the QPS in undertaking investigations into criminal paedophilia through the use of its coercive hearings powers. Over the next 12 months the CCC is reviewing its role in combatting criminal paedophilia to determine how the CCC should position or reposition its strategy and develop and maintain its capability to best perform that role.

The changing character of criminal paedophilia as a global crime with a local footprint demands more intense collaboration among international, Commonwealth and state law enforcement, government agencies and the private sector. The CCC is working hard to ensure it remains connected and involved with our enforcement partners to deliver the greatest value possible for the investment made in this by the Queensland community.

**Mrs McMAHON:** My question is to the chairperson of the Crime and Corruption Commission. In relation to page 43 of the SDS, and without compromising operational sensitivity, could the chairperson of the Crime and Corruption Commission please advise the committee what activities the Crime and Corruption Commission has undertaken in investigating other serious crimes, including drug investigations and boiler room fraud, and other emerging challenges and concerns?

**Mr MacSporran:** The CCC investigates referred major crime, including organised crime. It also undertakes specific intelligence operations into criminal organisations and their participants who are alleged to be involved in criminal activity as well as investigations. During 2017-18 the CCC commenced 36 new investigations, held 259 hearings examining 264 witnesses and closed 72 investigations. The strategic areas of focus for the CCC's crime functions in 2017-18 included the illicit methylamphetamine market in Queensland as well as professional facilitators of crime.

In the same period the CCC finalised three investigations resulting in four persons charged with 32 offences related to trafficking and supplying methylamphetamine in Queensland. We also supported three QPS investigations involving methylamphetamine trafficking and undertook hearings in Cairns and Brisbane in relation to a number of South-East Queensland and regional drug-trafficking syndicates. Two CCC specific intelligence operations identified participants of organised syndicates involved in trafficking and producing methylamphetamine in Queensland.

In the same period our investigations involving professional facilitators focused on alleged fraud, money laundering and related offences by members of the legal profession and resulted in five persons charged with 13 offences. Offenders involved in serious drug-trafficking offences are increasingly using technology such as mobile applications that facilitate anonymous and encrypted communications to prevent identification and prosecution. That is one of the reasons we are formulating, with the additional funding we have received, a dedicated human source unit which will be designed to infiltrate directly criminal networks.

The methods and use of cryptocurrencies, the dark web and safe haven or offshore online commodity markets are presenting significant challenges for law enforcement efforts to combat serious drug offences and the laundering of proceeds. New crime methods, emerging drug markets and the growth in technology-enabled crime require specialised knowledge and skills and present challenges for ensuring CCC investigators are capable and technologically equipped to respond.

Commencing this year, the government has committed additional funding for us of \$7.4 million over four years and \$1.9 million in ongoing funding to provide for 13 additional front-line investigators. Some of those people will form the human source unit I mentioned a moment ago. It will also be used to upskill and better resource our forensic computing experts in their efforts to combat major crime and corruption.

**CHAIR:** Member for Mirani, do you have any questions?

**Mr ANDREW:** Not at this time, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Member for Noosa, do you have a question?

**Ms BOLTON:** Yes, I do. Minister, I refer to page 17 of the Service Delivery Statements and community legal service funding. With regard to Legal Aid and similar community services, is there any intention to reinstate funding for organisations who are providing advice on WorkCover cases, especially given the latest review of WorkCover does not address protection concerns for those under self-insurers?

**Mrs D'ATH:** The funding that is provided to Legal Aid Queensland and to our community legal centres is critically important. That is why the government fought so hard to stop the cuts that were going to happen by the Commonwealth. I am very pleased that, although it happened late and it still had a detrimental impact in that a lot of lawyers and services were ceased before there was that commitment, we have seen that funding. However, we still have seen cuts in Commonwealth funding in the past to legal aid. Our legal aid funding that is provided is quite comprehensive as far as the services that Legal Aid Queensland is able to provide. Legal Aid Queensland is now being funded—and this was one of the commitments we made when we came to government in 2015—to bring the

Legal Aid Queensland funding up to the national average so that they could provide that sort of support to individuals.

In relation to particular types of assistance that Legal Aid Queensland provides, I am happy to call up Anthony Reilly and have him speak directly. I know that some of our community legal centres certainly do provide employment advice as part of their funding. In some ways we can be constrained about the sort of assistance that CLCs are provided because of the limitations that the Commonwealth puts on. Although the Commonwealth gave us funding and reversed the cuts last time, they also narrowed down some of the scope. We saw organisations like LawRight in North Queensland, for example, not being able to be funded into the future out of that funding because they changed the scope of what the funding was allowed to be used for. Even though on the face of it some CLCs may be getting the same funding they got before, they are limited in what they can use those funds for. I am happy to invite Anthony Reilly, the CEO of Legal Aid Queensland, to the table to see whether he would like to add to that.

**Mr Reilly:** Legal Aid Queensland has a civil law service unit that provides advice and representation services in some employment law matters. For example, we have advice clinics that operate out of the Fair Work Commission. In relation to WorkCover, we do not currently have a specific program in relation to that area. It is more about the fair work employment law issues.

**Ms BOLTON:** Mr Chair, can I get a clarification?

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**Ms BOLTON:** My question was very specific—WorkCover and that constraint that was taken away.

**Mr LISTER:** It is a second question.

**CHAIR:** Do not interrupt, please. Let the member ask her question.

**Mr LISTER:** My point is that that is her second question.

**CHAIR:** It is just a follow-up question. You were allowed to do the same. Give her the courtesy.

**Ms BOLTON:** I will pose it as a second question. If it is a Commonwealth constraint, will the component to be able to give advice and assist those who have WorkCover concerns, especially those under self-insurers, be reinstated?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I can answer it to this extent: I would have to go back and look at the history of when it was being fund in the first place. When the member asks whether it will be reinstated, I am not aware of it originally being funded in the first place. As I say, the funding that the state government gives and administers on behalf of the Commonwealth when it comes to legal aid has pretty broad parameters, but it still has parameters as to what sort of assistance can be given in relation to individuals in relation to criminal matters, family law matters and civil matters. Before I answer, I would have to take it as a fact that it was provided and then rescinded at some point in relation to whether it would cease. I am happy to get back separately to the member to have a look at whether it was ever previously funded and, if it was, when it ceased. I am happy to have a further discussion with the member on that.

**CHAIR:** I hand over to the deputy chair. Do you have any questions?

**Mr LISTER:** Yes. I refer to the member for Kawana.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I call back the chairperson of the CCC please. Whilst he is making his way, I seek leave to table documents relevant to my next question—and I have copies.

**CHAIR:** Before leave is granted, can we see the documents?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have copies for everyone and they are stapled.

**CHAIR:** Can the Attorney and the chair of the CCC please be provided with a copy?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Here is a copy for the chair.

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, can you advise the committee whether or not these documents contravene the standing orders?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** To my knowledge they do not.

**CHAIR:** Is there just the one letter, member for Kawana?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Correct.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I do not have a copy yet, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Could the Attorney and the chair of the CCC please be provided with a copy? Can I have a moment to peruse the document?

**Mr LISTER:** Mr Chairman, the member for Kawana has undertaken that he believes it to be in accordance with standing orders.

**CHAIR:** Member for Southern Downs, do not interrupt me. One of my roles is to—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Filibuster.

**Mr LISTER:** Yes, filibuster.

**CHAIR:** That is an imputation. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr LISTER:** I withdraw.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted to table the document? There being no objection, leave is granted.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have tabled correspondence just now received by the Office of the Leader of the Opposition from the Office of the Information Commissioner regarding an external review of a right-to-information application regarding investigations of fraud or serious financial irregularity in the expenses of Cavendish Road State High School when the member for Mansfield was its principal. The correspondence noted, following an audit of the Cavendish Road State High School finances, that the Audit Office raised matters of concerns with the department. On 21 July 2017 the department referred the matters to the CCC. Mr Chairman, can you confirm the CCC reviewed this matter and what was the result of that assessment and the investigation?

**Mr MacSporran:** It was assessed as being in a category that we could refer it back to or refer it to, I should say, the Department of Education to deal with subject to our monitoring the progress of it and the outcome. As far as we know, that is ongoing.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chairman, in terms of what you have just said, you think the process is ongoing. My understanding is that, because the former principal resigned and now is an elected member of parliament, that process ceased. Has the CCC received—

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Chair—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Here is my question.

**CHAIR:** Excuse me, member for Kawana.

**Mrs D'ATH:** There seems to be more debate going on than questions being put.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is a dialogue which has happened every year at estimates between the chair of the CCC and this committee.

**CHAIR:** Can the member for Kawana advise the committee how this is relevant to the appropriations?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Absolutely. Page 43 refers to the CCC's investigative activities, reduction of corruption in Queensland and 'pursue corruption involving elected officials'. I am very concerned about alleged misconduct of public servants.

**CHAIR:** I ask the member for Kawana to stop the comment and get to the question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You asked me what I was referring to. I was telling you what I was referring to. I am answering your question, Mr Chair. Chairperson of the CCC, you do not know whether this investigation is finalised or not by the department. Is that correct?

**Mr MacSporran:** No. I need to correct something I said before. I understood that it was referred back to the Department of Education—which is not unusual—subject to our monitoring role, but there is another option which I am told is what applied here which was that we referred it back to the Department of Education with no outcome advice required. That would suggest that it was not serious enough in our view, on the facts as we knew them that were referred to us, to require any monitoring by us or advice to us before the investigation was concluded.

There are various levels of seriousness. The most serious we retain. The less serious we send back with a public interest review required which means that we would get regular reports at six weeks and so on as to what they are doing with it. The other one is a merit and compliance review which is a report to us before they conclude the investigation so that we might have an opportunity to say what needs to be done that they have not done. The least invasive, if you like, which suggests the least serious allegations in our view, is where it is simply referred back for attention by the department internally with no outcome advice required to us, so we have no further interest in that matter.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Are you aware, Mr MacSporran, with respect to the referral back to the department that the CCC made, that the member for Mansfield made—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, my understanding from the last question from the chair of the CCC is that they have no further involvement in the matter.

**Mr LISTER:** Mr Chairman, can he conclude his question before you make that judgement?

**CHAIR:** I remind the member for Southern Downs that when I am speaking not to interrupt me.

**Mr LISTER:** Have you finished speaking, Mr Chairman?

**CHAIR:** I have. Do you have a point of order?

**Mr LISTER:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** What is your point of order?

**Mr LISTER:** That you are ruling on the question before the question has concluded. I ask that you allow the member to finish his question.

**CHAIR:** That is not a point of order. I ask the member for Kawana to move on.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr MacSporran, are you aware of the allegations that were raised with that referral to the CCC by the department?

**Mr MacSporran:** Not personally, no.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Could you undertake to come back to the committee on those allegations?

**Mr MacSporran:** It has been assessed and a decision was made by those who have the duty to assess them at our agency that it should go back to the department, because of the nature of it, to be investigated by them without any further referral back to us. If the facts remain the same, we would have no further interest in it. We have other things we need to carry on with. If the facts change or there are more serious allegations that can be, in the view of some, established, they should come back to us and seek to ventilate the issue. As they stand, we have no further interest in the matter at all.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is difficult, Mr Chair, to be able to provide further evidence when the government is withholding information from—

**CHAIR:** That is not a question; that is a comment.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** In parliament the member for Mansfield—and I am ascertaining what was referred—

**CHAIR:** Is there a question, member for Kawana?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** If you give me a second, I will get the question out, Mr Chair. The CCC spent money in assessing the matter that came from the Department of Education to the CCC so it is a budgetary matter. The member for Mansfield made various statements in parliament with respect to what these allegations—

**CHAIR:** Member for Kawana, could you ask your question or I will ask you to move on.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Are you aware of any of the allegations involving the purchase of alcohol using taxpayers' money at the Cavendish Road State High School?

**Mr MacSporran:** As I have said, I am not familiar personally with the details of the complaint matter. All I can say is what I have said, which is that it was deemed to be in a category that could appropriately and legitimately be referred back to the department for investigation—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** When was that referred back to the department?

**Mr MacSporran:** I cannot give you the date. I suspect if it went back in that category it would have been reasonably soon after it arrived at our place.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Chair, I defer back to the member.

**CHAIR:** This is the last question in this block.

**Mr JANETZKI:** My question is to the chair of the CCC. I note a radio interview conducted by the local government minister on 10 July. Under questioning from that particular journalist in relation to the potential undermining of the CCC and the Supreme Court process, the local government minister said—

I am acting on the advice that I have had from the chair of the CCC. The chair of the CCC wants me to take this action. I have his support. I've been speaking to him.

Mr MacSporran, did you advise the local government minister to introduce this new local government bill to sack the Ipswich City Council before the Supreme Court had considered its appeal?

**Mr MacSporran:** No, I didn't. I have issued a press statement that clarified what involvement I did have. It is all set out there. You have read that, no doubt. What it reveals is that what we do in investigating and charging people is done independently of government, or anyone else for that matter. It is our role and we take that seriously. That is the case with Ipswich as it is with all of our investigations. However, there is an obligation on us in certain circumstances to keep the government informed of developments, and, indeed, if the opposition are interested and it is appropriate we can do the same for them.

Where matters of policy arise it is not unusual for us to disseminate information to the relevant minister. I have been in reasonably regular contact with the previous minister, Mr Furner, as well as the current minister, Mr Hinchliffe, in respect of, in particular, the Belcarra matters, the larger reform package, what is intended and, more particularly with the current minister, the Ipswich City Council. I have disseminated a number of items of information that are relevant to the performance of that council. I have said publicly and have confirmed with the minister that we intend at the end of our criminal investigation, which is in the next few weeks, to issue a public report that will deal with broader issues of lack of governance, transparency and accountability with Ipswich City Council.

The minister rang me—I was on leave; I was in New York—to advise me before he announced it that he proposed to produce a bill to parliament to achieve the dismissal of the council. He wanted to know whether that would be in any way prejudicial to our ongoing criminal investigations. I told him no, it would not and I told him the same conversation as I have said in the statement that I supported the outcome being the dismissal, but the process by which he was to achieve that or sought to achieve it and the advice he got to do it was a matter entirely for him and the government, as it is.

**CHAIR:** The next question is to the Attorney-General. In reference to page 83 of the SDS, can the Attorney-General please advise of any improvements in our electoral system to ensure openness and transparency?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I welcome the question in relation to the Electoral Commission of Queensland and what the commission is doing to drive improvements in the electoral system. As all committee members know, we introduced real-time disclosure of political donations in February 2017, known as the electronic disclosure system. That was launched to enable real-time reporting of political donations in Queensland. Political entities such as candidates, parties and donors are required to report the details of gifts and loans in real time, being within seven business days of the gift and loan being made. Then it requires the recipient of those gifts or loans to acknowledge receipt. When you go onto the electronic disclosure scheme system what you will see is 'reconciled' and 'unreconciled'. That is a safety mechanism to make sure that no-one can go on the site, claim to make a donation to someone which is not legitimate and the individual or party is held to account for what is not a legitimate donation. The whole purpose of the reconciliation is to give the candidate of the political party the opportunity to be aware of that declaration and confirm receipt of that declaration or say, 'No, that has never occurred.' If it cannot be reconciled then it can be taken off the site as not being a legitimate donation by the Electoral Commission.

Having seven business days creates transparency and accountability. We are leading the country in relation to this. No other jurisdiction has real-time disclosure. This system was fully tested last year with the state general election in November 2017. This was the first time that voters had been able to go into an election to vote and know who is making donations, how much they are donating and who they are donating to. That data is real-time, right up to seven days before voting day. In the past those voters would have had to wait up to six months after an election to see the returns to know anything about all of the money that had been donated up to but including the election period.

We are very proud of the system that has been introduced. I have to say that, as the minister, I have had nothing but positive feedback from the users of the system. People are finding it very easy to register and to put up their donation for candidates and political parties to reconcile. That is what we hoped for—a very user-friendly system—and that is the feedback we are getting.

It is not well known that the LNP challenged those laws in relation to gifts and loans that are made to the LNP state branch in Queensland for the use of federal candidates. The Supreme Court found against the LNP and upheld the laws that we introduced. That is now on appeal to the Court of Appeal in relation to the LNP challenging those laws. We know also that Gary Spence from the LNP is challenging the developer donation laws in the High Court.

Other improvements that the Electoral Commission is undertaking are enrol-to-vote initiatives and educational campaigns. I believe we are at the highest level we have been for registered voters, so that is great for Queensland. We do rely on AEC data to maintain the Electoral Commission register in Queensland, but that does not mean the Electoral Commission of Queensland does not have a role in trying to get more people on the roll. They engage in extensive advertising and campaigns to get people, especially those who have recently turned 18 or who have become an Australian citizen, on the roll.

The advertising campaign and the work that the ECQ is doing includes a multilingual guide to voting which gave clear instructions in 27 languages on how to vote in the last election. In addition to the general election, this now applies to local government as well. Twenty-one local government by-elections have also for the first time shown the donations that have been made to local government candidates, which is fantastic.

Throughout the year the ECQ issues timely enrolment reminders via social media and interviews with traditional media. These measures are cost effective and can target specific communities. The number of enrolled voters increased by more than 14,600 prior to the election despite a once-in-a-generation spike in enrolments just a few months earlier. We believe that goes directly to the same-sex marriage survey. To be eligible to vote in that survey you had to be registered and so we saw a significant increase with people getting on the roll so they could have a say in that survey.

One of the more recent initiatives soon to occur is 'Guide to Democracy'. The ECQ will host a website called 'Guide to Democracy', which is a citizenship resource for students and teachers. It explains democratic processes, how political decisions impact on everyday lives and ways to effect positive change in the community. The site encourages young Queenslanders to participate in democracy and aims to reduce youth radicalisation by highlighting nonviolent ways to be heard. The project was initiated by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, which worked alongside the Electoral Commission of Queensland and the former department of education and training to deliver the site, which includes lesson plans and election guides and materials. I really hope this is taken up by our schools, and I encourage all committee members and members of parliament once this goes live to talk to their schools about this. Ultimately, as elected members, no matter who voters vote for, what we want is for them to have an informed vote: know who they are voting for, why they are voting for them and how the system works.

We have a very proud democratic system in this country. When there are significant changes at elections we do not have riots on the street. We have a very peaceful, democratic process where elections happen, outcomes are declared and governments form. That is one we should be very pleased about, but I do not think we should take it for granted and we need to educate our young school leavers in the school system about the voting system, the democratic system and how it works. I am very proud of the work that the ECQ is doing.

**Mrs McMAHON:** My question is to the Attorney-General. In reference to page 54 of the SDS, can the Attorney-General please advise of any initiatives Legal Aid Queensland is undertaking to support vulnerable Queenslanders access justice services?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for Mansfield for her question. The work that Legal Aid Queensland does, as I mentioned before in answering a question from the member for Noosa, is critically important. They provide not only community legal education, legal information and advice but also duty lawyer services, court and tribunal representation and dispute resolution to those who are financially disadvantaged Queenslanders. The work they do is supporting those most vulnerable in Queensland at their most vulnerable time.

One of the most recent initiatives I was very pleased to launch is Counselling Notes Protect. This is a legal service that we launched at Legal Aid Queensland last week. The service focuses on providing legal advice and task assistance to sexual assault victims and support services. It provides court representation for sexual assault victims to prevent or limit the disclosure of counselling communications in criminal law and domestic and family violence court proceedings, and education and training to sexual assault support services, the legal profession and other support services and stakeholders about the privilege.

Legal Aid Queensland successfully tendered with the Women's Legal Service in a collaborative effort—and I have to applaud these organisations for coming together—to establish a statewide sexual assault counselling privilege legal assistance service, with funding of \$1.588 million over 2017 to 2020. They will establish a dedicated telephone line. The telephone line is 1300267762, for anyone who is

listening, and was established for the Counselling Notes Protect service, and two new positions have been established.

This parliament and the members in this chamber today passed a law last year about establishing the sexual assault counselling privilege, but passing the law is not enough. It is making sure that you are funding the services to then make sure that vulnerable victims out there are aware that this law is in place. You can say, 'You have this protection,' but that protection is only there if that protection is invoked, if they know they have that right to protection.

Why is this so important? The fact is that victims often do not go and seek counselling on the belief that anything they say to that counsellor is also going to be used in court and used against them which would further traumatise them through that process. We know that when sexual assault victims make a complaint to police and go to court it is a very distressing time anyway. I am very proud of the work we have done—such as the special witness status and not having to give evidence in court but in a private room with a support person, having a petition, and not allowing the individual defendant to cross-examine that witness. These are all important things, but it is work like what Legal Aid Queensland is doing, along with the Women's Legal Service, that makes this work in practice.

I want to acknowledge that great work. They are also doing great work in family advocacy and support services with funding they have received. Legal Aid Queensland is receiving Commonwealth funds—and I will acknowledge that there are Commonwealth funds, although it expires at the end of 2019—for the family advocacy and support service, as well as the \$530,000 for a duty lawyer service supporting the domestic violence unit pilot in Rockhampton.

I just want to make this point when it comes to domestic and family violence and sexual assault. This funding from the Commonwealth is great, but it ends next year and there is nothing in this year's budget. This means that once again we are going to get to March, April or May next year and these organisations will not know if this service can continue. We really need to do everything we can to convince the Commonwealth to move sooner rather than later to reaffirm that funding beyond 2019.

**Mrs McMAHON:** My question is to the Attorney-General. In reference to page 53 of the SDS, can the Attorney-General please advise how Legal Aid Queensland is supporting law students and graduate lawyers, particularly in regional Queensland?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for Macalister for her question. This is another great initiative that I want to congratulate Legal Aid Queensland on. They have established four new temporary graduate positions—and this started in 2017-18—which are located in regional offices. I am sure our regional members will be pleased to hear this. There is one in Townsville, two in Maroochydore and one in Ipswich. The graduate lawyer appointment—

**CHAIR:** Sorry to interrupt, Attorney-General. If committee members wish to have a discussion, please take it outside but do not interrupt the proceedings.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I am sure they are keen to hear about this wonderful graduate program of Legal Aid Queensland. The graduate lawyer appointments are for a period of 24 months. The graduates will be provided on-the-job development support in the areas of criminal law and family law. In support of the strategies of Legal Aid Queensland, they recently established a First Nations Advisory Committee. Three of the four new graduate positions are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. To be eligible for the graduate program, applicants were to have completed a law degree, enrolled in a practical legal training course or have recently completed a PLT course. During the 2018-19 financial year, Legal Aid Queensland has budgeted and planned to recruit a further four temporary graduate lawyers, which is fantastic, with these positions expected to be located in Brisbane this time. Legal Aid Queensland has also identified and recruited four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander undergraduates in the Brisbane contact centre as client information officers with a focus on providing services to clients calling on the Indigenous hotline.

I want to emphasise that, when we talk about equality and diversity in our legal profession and in our courts for that matter, it is not just about gender equality. We want more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal graduates coming up through the ranks, reaching those higher positions, becoming barristers, becoming Queen's Counsel and, hopefully, having more being appointed to the bench like Judge Jarro recently. I think this is a fantastic initiative. It is a way of mentoring young law graduates, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law graduates. I thank Legal Aid Queensland for what they are doing in this space.

**CHAIR:** Before we go to opposition questions, I want to indicate that we will be having a break at 10.30.



**Mr JANETZKI:** I have one further brief question for Mr MacSporran. Can you outline for the committee how many investigations have been undertaken by the CCC this year in relation to union corruption?

**Mr MacSporran:** None. Of course we have received no complaint about union corruption, and there would be jurisdictional problems anyway.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I am surprised to hear that. Does that mean no official investigation was launched in relation to the allegations of union corruption on the Gold Coast?

**Mr MacSporran:** I am not familiar with that matter immediately, I must say. You might be able to give me some more detail that might jog my memory.

**Mr JANETZKI:** It was with respect to a candidate seeking office in local government on the Gold Coast. There were allegations made in respect of a CFMEU donation, I think it was, to their particular campaign. Has the CCC undertaken any investigation in that regard?

**Mr MacSporran:** No. I have said this before publicly. We became aware that two candidates had each failed to declare about \$38,000 in a donation from the CFMEU. We only became aware of that because the CFMEU had filled out a declaration form notifying the Electoral Commission that they had made the donation, whereas the candidate had not. We commenced the investigation. We interviewed and called I think it was two or three witnesses from the CFMEU to give evidence about their contact with the candidate and what they told the candidate about what they were going to do for the candidate. If I remember, one of them involved a pictorial representation of the candidate herself on buses that were touring the Gold Coast business district. The candidate claimed not to know that the CFMEU was supporting her campaign, despite these buses going around the city.

At the end of the day, and I think we said this in the Belcarra report, the union had done nothing wrong; in fact, it had brought to our attention appropriately that they had made donations. There was no allegation there at all of union corruption. The wrongdoing was alleged to be on the part of both of those candidates—one of whom, when it was brought to her attention, amended her return, but the one who was subsequently criticised in the Belcarra report refused to amend her return and, as far as I know, still has not amended that return to reflect that donation.

**Mr JANETZKI:** So there are no ongoing investigations underway in respect of any union corruption matters?

**Mr MacSporran:** No, not to my knowledge. As I said, I think there is a problem with jurisdiction because we have jurisdiction over the public sector in essence, and unions are not public sector bodies or officials.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Thank you, Chair. I call the Commissioner of the Queensland Family and Child Commission. Thanks for joining us. My question relates to the budget of the QFCC, which has been cut in the budget papers. There is a cut of almost \$1 million between the estimated actual figure in 2017-18 and the budget for 2018-19. Can you explain for us the impact of these cuts?

**Ms Vardon:** Yes, I certainly can. Thank you very much for the opportunity to talk about the excellent work of the QFCC through the limited life funding which has been provided through the commission of inquiry, the Carmody report, and to explain how that work is now embedded in the ongoing work of the QFCC, for which we will have adequate resources going forward. In relation to the year we are in now and the impact, I think you mentioned a particular sum of \$1 million. Just to bring that up to date, it now nets out at around \$575,000 as a reduction because the government provided us with additional funds elsewhere making that difference.

The QFCC and other agencies with limited life funding always knew, and have planned for very carefully, the fact that the Carmody money, as it is called, would come to an end this year into next year. It has been our responsibility within the QFCC—my responsibility, in particular—to make sure that that money was spent in a way which delivered on the recommendations of the Carmody report in terms of our sector development work and our community education work, but also became sufficiently well embedded in the work of the QFCC that we do not lose the collateral, we do not lose the campaign material that we have developed and we do not lose the relationships that we have developed. We keep all of those and we have enough feet on the ground going forward to make sure that that work continues with adequate resources. Limited life funding is simply that.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Thank you, Commissioner. That was my only question to you. Chair, with your indulgence, I call on the Acting Electoral Commissioner of the ECQ.

**CHAIR:** I remind the committee that this will be the last question before we break at 10.30.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Acting Electoral Commissioner, thank you for joining us. My one question, as is permitted by the chair, is: has the ECQ formed a view on who regularly makes relevant planning applications, and what is that view?

**Mr Vidgen:** Just to clarify, I think the member is referring to the new legislation that is coming in.

**Mr JANETZKI:** That is correct.

**Mr Vidgen:** I can give an update to the committee in terms of the processes being undertaken by the ECQ in this regard. As you would be aware, the legislation has not commenced yet so we are working through implementation activities to ensure the commission is well positioned when the legislation does commence.

To answer your question in terms of what process we are undertaking, at the moment we are going through a range of initiatives in terms of getting some legal clarity around some of the definitions which have come up previously when the bill was before the House. We are doing that at the moment. We are working through a range of internal procedures in regards to information which we need to communicate to political parties and relevant interested parties. Before the legislation does actually commence—and we have not got a commencement date yet—we will be having direct communications and engagement with political parties and other interested parties in terms of giving them some good guidance in regards to where the legislation fits and their business. That is ongoing at the moment.

Hopefully, within the next six weeks, we will be in a position to have that direct communication with political parties and interested parties to work through those issues. We do have some benefit in regard to how the legislation has been working in New South Wales. We are working very closely with the New South Wales Electoral Commission in terms of the material they have, in recognition that it is not exactly the same but there are certainly large areas of duplication and similarity in that space.

I am confident that the commission is well positioned so that when the legislation does commence we will have a good system in place to provide adequate support to political parties, to potential donors, where we can provide them good information beforehand. Of course, in terms of the legislation, there is the capability to seek determinations, and we are working through how that will work as well.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I note there is a little time left, Chair.

**CHAIR:** There is one more question but could the answer be limited to two minutes.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Thank you, Chair. Acting Electoral Commissioner, you talked about working through those issues with lawyers and identifying particular issues. Does the Electoral Commission envisage also developing and then publishing written guidance rather than just conducting discussions directly with political parties? Will there be some public guidance available to people who want to get involved in the political process?

**Mr Vidgen:** Certainly. Our proposal is—and we are still working through these issues, so I can tell you what our intention is, which we will deliver on—to provide information on our website, fact sheets, guidelines, forms and so forth which will be up, ready and available to be provided to parties in advance of when the legislation commences. That will not only give good guidance in terms of decisions they need to make but also refer to example situations which might be relevant and apply to them. The one word of caution will be that each situation will need to be looked at contextually. While the case examples will provide a great guidance, it is important, too, that if individuals need to seek a determination, they do that. There are provisions under the act on how they do that and how a determination can be made. To answer your question, yes, we will be providing written material to interested parties so they can be best informed when the legislation commences.

**CHAIR:** The committee will now stop for a break—

**Mrs D'ATH:** Can I take a moment to thank every one of the statutory authorities who are here?

**CHAIR:** Sorry. Yes, of course.

**Mrs D'ATH:** If I understand correctly, the first session was set aside for our statutory authorities and we will be moving on to general. I just take this opportunity to thank our statutory authorities. They do an incredible job. They are very important oversight bodies in this state and they work each and every day to ensure the highest standards in their profession in looking after people in Queensland. I thank each and every one of those statutory authorities, not just in the preparation for estimates but for the work they do each day. Thank you for your indulgence.

**CHAIR:** The committee will now stop for a break. The hearing will resume at 10.45 am with the examination of the estimates for the Justice and Attorney-General portfolio.

**Proceedings suspended from 10.31 am to 10.46 am.**



**CHAIR:** Welcome back, Attorney-General and officials. The committee will now continue its examination of the proposed expenditure for the Justice and Attorney-General portfolio.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Chair, before we continue, I would like to raise a matter of privilege suddenly arising.

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mrs D'ATH:** It was noted during the first session the cufflinks worn by the member for Kawana during his questioning of the chairperson of the Crime and Corruption Commission. I have reviewed Twitter and I seek leave to table some documents from Twitter. It has been confirmed that during the committee hearing the member for Kawana was wearing cufflinks with the letters 'F' and 'U' on them and then crossed his arms in a fashion which was clearly obvious to the witnesses of the committee while he was questioning the chairperson of the Crime and Corruption Commission.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Chair, this is not a matter of privilege.

**Mrs D'ATH:** It absolutely is.

**CHAIR:** Allow the Attorney to finish, please.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Thank you, Mr Chair. This is inappropriate behaviour and potentially interference or intimidation of a witness before this committee. I will be writing to the chairperson and the Speaker regarding this matter. It is appalling behaviour by the member for Kawana, who is also Manager of Opposition Business and was a former attorney-general in this state, to conduct himself in that way. He appears to have been very deliberate in his actions.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted to table the document?

**Mr JANETZKI:** No.

**CHAIR:** May I remind the member for Toowoomba South that, not being part of the committee, you do not have the right to vote. My understanding is that it has been carried. Leave is granted. I note that the matter is going to be handled appropriately by a letter to the Speaker. I hand back to the member for Toowoomba South.

**Mr JANETZKI:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney, there have been widespread reports and allegations throughout Queensland recently of cremation shopping, backyard embalments and coffin swapping. Complaints to the Office of Fair Trading have blown out by 250 per cent—beyond that—recently in respect of funeral industry complaints. What has the government done and what does it intend to do to investigate rogue operators in the funeral industry?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. I would say that some of the preamble to that question is not accurate. The reality is that the Office of Fair Trading will consider all complaints that come into the office and undertake compliance operations in relation to the funeral service industry to ensure compliance and consumer protection throughout 2018-19. When the member talks about a 250 per cent increase, can we just be clear that, on average, the number of complaints made to the Office of Fair Trading in relation to the funeral industry—when we talk about the funeral services industry we are talking about funeral directors, funeral home staff, cemetery and crematorium staff, embalmers and gravediggers and also people who transport bodies—is eight annually over the last five years. During 2016-17 I believe there were seven complaints. It has gone from seven to 25 in the last financial year. They are rough sums, so I do not know if that is 250 per cent. That is 25 complaints out of 15,000 complaints on average received by the Office of Fair Trading. That does not mean those complaints should not be considered. We encourage people who have any concerns, whether it is the funeral industry or any other industry that falls within the responsibility of the Office of Fair Trading, to put those complaints forward.

It is certainly incorrect to state that there have been widespread complaints about some of the issues that the member has talked about. Of the complaints that have been received—51 in total since 2013—there has been one formal complaint of alleged coffin swapping and there has been one other investigation about coffin swapping that was initiated on their own initiative, due to a media report, by the Office of Fair Trading.

The majority of complaints deal with funeral insurance and bonds. I know that the Office of Fair Trading has done a lot in relation to this issue. It is a particular problem in our Indigenous communities, where some of these operators have actually gone in selling funeral insurance. There has been a lot of work done in educating the community. In fact, we have whole towns now that are 'do not knock' towns. They have a big sign saying, 'You cannot come here and knock on doors.' Otherwise it is a breach.

In terms of costs and the quality of funerals there have been about 13 complaints over the last five years. There have been 16 complaints for funeral insurance and seven relating to disputed ownership of deceased's ashes. Sometimes family members will dispute who has ownership of those ashes as to who should have the right to deal with those ashes. There have been five complaints about advertising, three dealing with cemetery upkeep and management, two dealing with the Funeral Benefit Business Act, two relating to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and coroners' contracts, one dealing with death registration, and I have already talked about one dealing with an alleged coffin swap and one dealing with an executor and will.

In relation to the allegations that I know the member has been out around Queensland talking about—

**Mr JANETZKI:** I have not been talking about it; whistleblowers have.

**CHAIR:** Please do not interrupt the Attorney when the Attorney is speaking.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I will take that interjection. If they are whistleblowers they should come forward as whistleblowers. As I say, there has been one complaint to the Office of Fair Trading. I understand the police have investigated one complaint that dealt with Rockhampton and the alleged coffin swapping and have failed to find any breaches of criminal law. The Office of Fair Trading have investigated both the allegations involving Bundaberg and Rockhampton and have not established any contravention of the consumer laws. On that basis, we will continue to deal with complaints as they come in.

As I say, in 2018-19 it is the intention of the Office of Fair Trading to undertake a compliance operation targeting the funeral services industry to ensure they are complying with all of the legislation that is applicable to them, including Australian Consumer Law, to ensure that they are meeting their obligations and, again, encourage them to follow the voluntary code of conduct that was introduced by the previous government when they considered the funeral industry and set up the voluntary code.

**CHAIR:** This will be the last question in this block.

**Mr JANETZKI:** In response to your last answer, Attorney, I want to raise one question. You said in respect of the Rockhampton case—Mrs Valigura passed away in January this year and obviously there were allegations in relation to coffin swapping, which you have alluded to. You just stated that the Office of Fair Trading had not established any contravention of consumer laws in respect of that case. I seek leave to table a letter from the Office of Fair Trading to the family of Mrs Valigura.

**CHAIR:** Before you go any further, can we have clear copies because I cannot read that?

**Mr JANETZKI:** I can read it for you, Chair, if you like.

**CHAIR:** No, no. Provide a clear copy so it can be considered by the committee appropriately.

**Mr JANETZKI:** This is the only copy we have, so I will explain it. I expect given the Attorney's response—

**CHAIR:** Can I remind you that lengthy preambles are not allowed, so before you start—

**Mr LISTER:** This is getting a little bit complicated.

**CHAIR:** Do you have a point of order?

**Mr LISTER:** I have a point of order. I can read the letter that is there.

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order. I ask the member to ask his question.

**Mr JANETZKI:** In the response from the Office of Fair Trading to the family of Mrs Valigura—the distressed family of Mrs Valigura—there were only comments in relation to the criminal matters. The Attorney has just stated that the Office of Fair Trading had not established any contravention of the consumer laws. If this was the only piece of correspondence that was sent to the family of Mrs Valigura, the response related entirely to the criminal affairs. It was like a first year law student's response—

**CHAIR:** Can I ask the member to ask the question?

**Mr JANETZKI:** The question is: did the Office of Fair Trading consider any breaches of fair trading laws or the Australian Consumer Law in relation to the matter of Mrs Valigura at the start of this year?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I have already answered that. I have stated clearly—and it is unfortunate that the member felt like he needed to impugn the Office of Fair Trading in his comments about that correspondence in terms of making derogatory comments about the language used and the level of expertise of the Office of Fair Trading, of our experienced investigators in doing their job. The Office of Fair Trading have clearly indicated to me that that particular allegation—both allegations in relation to

the coffin swapping—has been investigated and they have not found any breaches of consumer laws in relation to both of those. Just to clarify, we are talking about the Bundaberg one?

**Mr JANETZKI:** No. Mrs Valigura—Rockhampton.

**Mrs D'ATH:** As I say, the advice that I have been given is that there have been no found allegations as far as any breaches are concerned.

**CHAIR:** I call the member for Mansfield to ask the next question.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Following on from the Attorney-General's opening remarks this morning and referring to pages 5 and 9 of the SDS, can the Attorney-General please provide an update on the work being undertaken by the Queensland Law Reform Commission?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for Mansfield for her question. The Queensland Law Reform Commission has a very important role to play in meeting the needs of the Queensland community and ensuring that Queensland law is contemporary, modern and simple. The Queensland Law Reform Commission is an independent body that makes recommendations in areas of law in need of reform and submits reports to me as the Attorney-General which must be tabled in the parliament in accordance with the Law Reform Commission Act 1968.

In conducting its work the Queensland Law Reform Commission produces carefully researched, rigorous, quality and practical reports on a range of diverse and often unrelated contemporary topics. As I announced in my opening statement this morning, I have made two new referrals to the QLRC for review and investigation: one is to modernise Queensland's laws relating to civil surveillance and protect privacy in the context of current and emerging technologies; the other is to consider privacy protections for workers in the context of current and emerging surveillance devices.

Queenslanders are increasingly concerned about surveillance devices, including neighbours using CCTV cameras and employers using cameras and GPS surveillance. Queensland's Invasion of Privacy Act 1971 provides for offences relating to listening devices but does not regulate optical tracking or data surveillance devices. Queenslanders therefore must rely on general laws to protect their privacy where surveillance is involved; for example, common law actions for nuisance and section 227A of the Criminal Code Act 1899, which prohibits a person observing or visually recording another person where a reasonable adult would expect privacy.

The Queensland Drones Strategy, which was released in June this year, highlights the substantial potential economic benefits and opportunities from drone technology; however, the strategy recognises the community concerns about privacy that come from proliferating drone use. A key action of the strategy is the QLRC referral which I have recently made. The terms of reference for the Civil Surveillance Review asks the QLRC to consider whether legislation to appropriately protect the privacy of individuals in the context of civil surveillance technologies is warranted. I have asked the QLRC to report back on this review by 1 October 2019.

The workplace surveillance terms of reference are more limited and will look at whether legislation to protect workers' privacy should be considered. It will consider employers' use of surveillance devices such as CCTV and tracking and data surveillance devices. The QLRC will report on this review by 30 June 2020. I should say that in finalising terms of reference and deciding on time frames I always consult directly with the QLRC about what they believe is an appropriate time frame to undertake these references. It is due to those considerations that a decision was made to split this into two separate references with different time frames for reporting back. These are very important issues in our community; privacy is absolutely worth protecting. It is important that our laws keep pace with technological advances so we can keep our communities safe.

Can I also say to the member for Mansfield and committee members that I want to acknowledge the tremendous work of the QLRC in their most recent report No. 76: *Review of termination of pregnancy laws*. Undoubtedly, the tabling last week of the report *Review of termination of pregnancy laws* provides a timely example of the QLRC's critical role in ensuring the systemic development and reform of this state's laws. The report follows an almost year-long inquiry.

The current law in Queensland makes it a crime to unlawfully terminate a woman's pregnancy except in limited circumstances. Queensland's current laws create uncertainty among doctors and the possibility of prosecution of health professionals and women and impedes the provision of safe, accessible health care. The terms of reference issued to the QLRC in June last year specifically required consideration of how the Criminal Code should be reformed to remove terminations performed by medical practitioners and to otherwise modernise and clarify the law relating to terminations. This is a very important health issue for women across Queensland. All other Australian jurisdictions except

New South Wales have reformed this area of the law, recognising that it is predominantly a matter between a woman and her doctor.

The QLRC consulted widely with the community and medical profession, receiving almost 1,200 submissions on its consultation paper, which it released in December 2017, and more than 2,700 submissions made to the previous parliamentary committee on this matter. The QLRC found that terminations should generally be treated as a health issue rather than a criminal matter. The QLRC has recommended significant reform to the Criminal Code: to repeal the current provisions criminalising termination and create a new offence of an unqualified person performing or assisting in a termination, which carries a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment; a provision to protect a woman from criminal responsibility for a termination; establish a legislative regime to regulate the conduct of health practitioners on the basis of a combined approach involving an on-request gestational limit of 22 weeks and a single broader additional ground to be satisfied after that time in consultation with another medical practitioner; protect the right of health practitioners to conscientiously object to perform or advise in relation to a termination and refer the woman to another health practitioner who does not have a conscientious objection; and establish a safe access zone of 150 metres around premises where termination services are ordinarily provided.

The QLRC's report includes draft legislation to give effect to the recommendations. It is now available online, as it has been tabled through the Clerk on the parliament website. The Palaszczuk government is committed to introducing the bill based on the draft legislation, including any necessary provisions to support effective implementation in August this year. I want to thank the QLRC, and I take this opportunity to acknowledge their impartial and expert review of this very important matter. I look forward to receiving their future reports in relation to the issues of privacy and surveillance.

**CHAIR:** With reference to page 64 of Budget Paper No. 4, could the Attorney-General update the committee as to how the Palaszczuk government is ensuring that prosecution services are funded to provide efficient justice for Queenslanders?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. Our investment in prosecutions is critical to the justice system in Queensland and providing fairness and justice not just to the individual who has been charged but, equally importantly, to the families who are the victims of crime in this state. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, as we know, is vital to ensuring that Queenslanders have access to an effective, responsive and efficient justice system. It is a requirement that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions lodges indictments within six months for them to pursue criminal charges against individuals, so being adequately resourced to meet time frames is very important.

I want to acknowledge that the Director of Public Prosecutions would normally be in the chamber with us today for estimates, but he is in the Court of Appeal in relation to a very high-profile murder case: the McCulkin case. I want to acknowledge the tremendous work of the Director of Public Prosecutions in his absence today.

The government recognises the growing complexity and demands placed on the criminal justice system and is committed to ensuring that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has the resources it needs to prosecute offenders. That is why in this year's budget the ODPP has been allocated increased funding of an additional \$5 million for the following year. This is in addition to a previous funding allocation of \$12.1 million over four years since 2016-17. The funding allocated seeks to address those workload pressures and backlogs that I have talked about in relation to indictment presentations and boosts the response to serious organised crime. We know that the sooner matters are brought before the court and heard the better it is while victims' and witnesses' memories are still fresh to ensure justice is done and that findings made as quickly as possible in relation to any charges.

The additional \$5 million in this budget will, in part, fund 30 positions predominantly based in Brisbane. Our past funding has ensured that a lot of our new prosecutors have been placed in regional towns, but due to the high demand in South-East Queensland these positions are predominantly based in Brisbane. Eight of those positions have been directed to the areas of greatest need, including creating a team of highly-skilled staff to prosecute high-profile cases. The remaining 22 positions continue to support new prosecution chambers which was established on 1 January this year with temporary DJAG funding. The chambers will also be the pilot site for a project that will commence on 30 July this year which is aimed at further increasing efficiencies by targeting matters for early resolution, thereby increasing the safety of Queenslanders and providing responsive government outcomes.

The additional positions have had a significant impact on the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions' efficiencies. We have been finding some of these funds within the department up until now, and I am really pleased that through the budget Treasury has provided these additional funds.

This is so important when we look at the ODPP's two performance measurements. In relation to the efficiency measure reports on indictments signed within four months of committal—I talked about the six-month time frame, but their target is four months—the ODPP has a target of 60 per cent within four months. The target for the ODPP's effectiveness measure reports on the conviction rate of defendants who are prosecuted on indictment is 80 per cent. Since the allocation of this additional funding the percentage of indictments signed under four months from committal exceeded the 60 per cent target and is now sitting at 71.9 per cent. The effectiveness measure in relation to conviction rates has increased beyond the 80 per cent target: they have reached a target of 91.8 per cent. That is really important. We talk about percentages and targets, but at the end of the day we are talking about people in our communities and people within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, who do a tremendous job. I want to acknowledge those efficiencies and the job that they do. I know how much this additional funding will assist.

**CHAIR:** This will be the last question in this block.

**Mrs McMAHON:** With reference to page 5 of the SDS and page 37 of Budget Paper No. 4, could the Attorney-General advise how her department is supporting the prevention of domestic and family violence in Queensland?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for Macalister for her question. I know that the member, like all committee members and members of parliament, wants to do all we can as elected members to tackle domestic and family violence in our community. But, as the *Not now, not ever* report clearly showed, it is not just the responsibility of government—no matter what level—but it is also the responsibility of our community and it requires cultural change in our community. As leaders in our community and as elected members we must help drive that change. We are very proud of the work that is being done to implement the *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland* report.

I can advise the member and the committee that the Palaszczuk government has invested \$69.5 million over four years and ongoing annual funding to permanently establish a Southport Domestic and Family Violence Court and roll out four more specialist courts in Beenleigh, Townsville with circuiting courts to Mount Isa and Palm Island. We have appointed new magistrates to support the work of the Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Court and provided funding over four years for vital professional domestic and family violence training for magistrates. We have implemented an electronic interface known as the eDV project to streamline application processes and the enforcement of protection orders. We have rolled out the specialist domestic and family violence duty lawyer scheme, providing legal support to both aggrieved and respondent parties involved in civil proceedings in 15 locations across the state with a planned expansion to 22 sites by 2020.

I would emphasise the importance of providing legal support to both the aggrieved and the respondent. We hear this from the legal profession, and I see the member for Toowoomba South nodding his head. What we hear is that if all you are doing is supporting the victim, then we are not going to get cultural change. We need respondents and defendants to understand the consequences, especially of DV orders. We are still seeing breaches of DV orders, so just going in and not opposing a DV order is not adequate enough. They must be supported in understanding what the terms of that order are so that we can reduce the number of breaches that are happening in our community.

The funding will also: expand the scope of the financial assistance scheme to ensure that all domestic and family violence victims have access to financial assistance; and establish a charter of victims' rights which includes the right of a victim, including domestic and family violence victims, to be informed of an accused's bail applications and outcomes. We have strengthened the criminal law response to domestic and family violence, including: allowing a domestic and family violence context of offending to be noted on charges and criminal histories; making domestic and family violence an aggravating factor on sentencing; ensuring that victims of domestic and family violence automatically have status as a special witness when giving evidence about the commission of an offence by the perpetrator; and the introduction of a new offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting.

Part of the government's efforts to bring the scourge of domestic and family violence out of the shadows is the publication of regular court statistics online, and this has only recently been published. The data, which will be updated quarterly, will include the number of domestic violence applications lodged, domestic violence orders made, penalties imposed for breaches of orders and the number of strangulation offences. These statistics show a dramatic rise in domestic and family violence charges since the government first brought in these new laws in 2015-16, because victims were finally able to

come forward with the knowledge that they would be taken seriously by the police, by the courts and by the community.

Crucially, though—and if members have not had a look at this data, please do; it is broken down across courts and across the state—the data is showing for the first time encouraging signs of stabilisation, the first tentative steps towards the long-term cultural change that is required to tackle domestic and family violence. We have a long way to go, but it is really pleasing that for the first time in a number of years we are seeing a decline not because women are not willing to come forward but we are seeing a decline because we are hoping that we are starting to see a change in our community, but we have a lot more work to do.

**CHAIR:** I welcome to the committee the member for Maiwar, Michael Berkman, and I invite Mr Berkman to ask his questions.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Thank you, Chair. My first question is for the Attorney-General and relates to Queensland's consent laws and the mistaken belief defence in section 24 of the Criminal Code. I note also that there has been some recent consultation with stakeholders such as Queensland's Women's Legal Service regarding their concerns and views on necessary law reform. Attorney-General, how often is the mistaken belief defence used as a defence in rape and sexual assault proceedings and what law reform steps are being taken, for example, referral to QLRC—

**CHAIR:** Sorry to interrupt the member, but one question at a time please.

**Mrs D'ATH:** In relation to the first element, being the number, I would have to take that on notice to see whether that data is captured in relation to defences, so I am happy to get back to the member on that. As the member has already highlighted, this issue has been raised by the Women's Legal Service. We have written to the Women's Legal Service asking for particulars of the sorts of areas in relation to sexual assault that they believe should be looked at in relation to the Criminal Code. We have also written to other stakeholders advising them of this issue and asking for their views in relation to that and of course also consulting with the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions for their views on it.

It is correct that New South Wales has indicated that the New South Wales government is going to refer this to the New South Wales Law Reform Commission for consideration. It is fair to say that there are differences across the country because not every jurisdiction operates under a code. There are differences between New South Wales and Queensland, but certainly I will be looking closely at what comes out of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission in relation to that referral. I do not believe there is a time frame that has been attached to that referral at this stage, so I am keen to see what the terms of reference are and the time frame for that referral to come back.

I also just want to indicate that the government has done a lot in relation to sexual assault and domestic and family violence, and I say both of them because they are interlinked. We know from a recent case—and I do not want to talk about particulars—that it is just as important to acknowledge the possibility of sexual assault within marriage. That is an important factor. With regard to the sorts of things we have sought to put in place, particularly around counselling—and I know the member was not in the room earlier when I talked about that—we have the sexual assault counselling privilege that we have introduced which is protecting those counselling notes and encouraging victims to come forward and seek support. Whether they ever report it—and we hope they do—at the very least they are seeking support through counselling to deal with the trauma of sexual assault.

We are also giving sexual assault victims special witness status, and that is really critical in ensuring that the defendant cannot cross-examine directly. As we know, in many of these cases the defendants are self-represented. It is really important that they cannot directly cross-examine the victim. Where the victim requests, we are allowing them to either have a barrier put up in the courtroom or give evidence from another room via video link. We have extended that and we have a huge investment in our audiovisual equipment across our courtrooms to support special witnesses and children witnesses. That allows for them not only to be in another room while giving that evidence but also to have a support person sitting right beside them while they are giving evidence. I think that is so critical.

You can never remove the risk of trauma through our court process. At the end of the day, the onus is on the prosecution to prove their case. The alleged victim and their evidence are critical to that case, and it will always be a traumatic situation of having to relive that experience through their evidence. You can never remove a right of defence from the defendant because they have a right also—a presumption of innocence—so there are defences there.



When it comes to mistaken belief and consent, it is quite prescriptive in relation to what is expected when it comes to consent and mistaken belief. The jury particularly must be satisfied that it is genuine and reasonable. It cannot just be mistaken belief. When it comes to consent, there is a whole lot of clarification of definition around what is the intent of consent. That all came about because of an extensive body of work that was done back in 2000. Having said that, a lot of work has been done. We are very proud of the work we have done in government to support victims of sexual assault and domestic and family violence. I await the consultation with the stakeholders that, as I say, I have written to in seeking their views and also will be watching closely what comes out of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission.

**CHAIR:** Member for Maiwar, do you have a further question?

**Mr BERKMAN:** I certainly do, if one is on offer. I have a further question for the Attorney-General, this time related to the administration of the Drugs Misuse Act. I note that this act was passed by the Queensland parliament in 1985 primarily to target drug traffickers and heroin as opposed to users of cannabis or other drugs. Attorney-General, how much has the department spent in each of the last three years in the administration and prosecution of offences for the possession and use of cannabis and, more broadly, offences for the possession and use of illicit drugs?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I am happy to take that on notice, but I have to say in taking that on notice that whatever information I am able to bring forward would be just in relation to the DPP. Obviously there are a number of charges in relation to possession of small amounts of cannabis, for example, that police prosecutors would deal with, not the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions deal with more serious matters—and we start talking about trafficking and those sorts of things. Individual possession of small amounts of drugs of any sort often would be dealt with by police prosecutors so I would not be able to give that data to the member, but I am happy to follow that up with the Director of Public Prosecutions to see what data we can provide.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Thanks, Attorney-General. If I can just clarify quickly, obviously where that role is taken on by the police prosecutor there will oftentimes be an expense for the department in terms of the courtroom—the forum—within which the police prosecutor is dealing with it. Is that something that you can deal with on notice as well?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I would think it would be an extraordinary amount of work to start looking at all of those matters. We would not be able to go back and track how long each one of those matters was before the court at the time and multiplying that by each magistrate and judge and courts. That is not something that we would collect or be able to provide to the member but certainly, as I say, we can look at the numbers of prosecutions. Again, we will not necessarily break it down to the number of hours that a prosecutor would spend on this but the number of prosecutions in relation to matters that the DPP deal with in relation to drug offences. You would have to direct any other questions in relation to police and police resources to the police minister.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Sure. I will certainly do that.

**CHAIR:** I move now to the member for Toowoomba South.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Attorney, in Queensland to start a funeral business you need a mobile phone and a station wagon. The QFDA, the AFDA and other industry associations have raised the possibility of some licensing or conduct regulation. Do you consider that necessary and are you considering it?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. As the member is aware, I have recently met with some of the industry stakeholders. When we talk about whether the government is considering regulating the industry, I think we need to put some facts around this. This is not an industry that is completely unregulated. It is bound by the Australian Consumer Law. It is bound by the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act. It is bound by the Cremations Act 2003. It is bound by the Coroners Act 2003. It is bound by local government laws. It is bound by the health and infection control regulations administered by QHealth. It is bound by the Funeral Benefit Business Act 1982 and it is bound by the Criminal Code Act 1899.

It is not factual to say this is an unregulated industry. There are many pieces of legislation at state and local government level that those operating in this industry must comply with. It is probably difficult and potentially unrealistic to think you can bring all of those elements into a specific act to regulate exhaustively everything they do and whether it is necessary to do that when you do have all of those pieces of legislation that must be complied with.

In addition—I stated this earlier and I am sure the member for Toowoomba South is well aware—the previous government undertook a review of this industry. All of those views of the industry that they

are expressing now were expressed then and the decision was made to not put in place further regulation or put in place a licensing regime to the industry but instead develop a voluntary code of conduct. Why is that important? Certainly we will continue to talk to the industry, but I understand the logic of doing that and the reason for that decision not to go to licensing. When we do that, we have to remember that this will not just apply to the big players in the industry; it applies to our small regional operators, some who do this part-time. As the member knows as a regional member—and we have many regional members sitting here today—some of these people do this part-time and have other jobs in their towns. When you start putting in place licensing and further regulation, that puts further obligations on them and absolutely puts further costs on those operators.

Further costs mean that either they decide that it is not viable for them to continue operating in their towns because the costs are too great or, alternatively, they pass those costs on to the customer. Who is the customer? The families of the deceased at their most vulnerable time. We know that families feel the pressure about costs of funerals as it is. To see those costs go up will increase pressure in those communities. If you are a very small town with very few operators, the last thing you want is those operators withdrawing their business because it is too costly or locals having far greater costs.

I understand the question of the member, but all of these issues were weighed up by the LNP when they were in government. Certainly they are in the front of my mind as far as whether it should be a licensed industry. I will continue to consult with industry stakeholders. I will continue to keep a close watching brief on what complaints come forward and the outcomes of any investigations and complaints to see if there are systemic problems in this industry. At the moment, there is no evidence of a systemic problem in the industry to warrant putting in place a whole lot of additional red tape, regulation and a licensing scheme. As I say, I will continue to talk with the stakeholders on this issue.

**CHAIR:** Before we continue, I would like to acknowledge students, schoolteachers and school leaders from the Pine Rivers electorate who are in the public gallery. This will be the last question in this block.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Attorney-General, are you aware of any one cent contracts between your department and funeral directors around Queensland? If so, what audit and compliance arrangements do you impose upon such funeral directors? In respect of funeral directors generally, you raised a large number of acts just recently. Can you speak to that, please?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for Toowoomba South for his question. In relation to the contracts, the assertion that there are these one cent contracts out there is not factually correct. What is correct is that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General is responsible for the cost of transporting bodies to mortuaries for coronial autopsies that are performed by forensic pathologists. The sites where autopsies are performed are declining due to the lack of suitably qualified pathologists and consequently have led to costs rising as well as more coronial autopsies being requested and the distances involved in conveying these bodies.

The Coroners Court of Queensland and the Queensland Health Forensic and Scientific Services have commenced a joint project to try to deal with some of these pressures. The contracts are done in a way that there is a two-stage competitive tender process for the provision of these services to replace contracts that expired on 31 January 2018. The procurement process was significant and covered 77 local government boundaries and resulted in 122 individual offers from the market. It is very important for me to state and reiterate that the procurement process was overseen by an independent probity adviser to ensure that all probity protocols were rigorously adhered to. When the member asks, 'What oversight? What audit?', it was an independent probity adviser who ensured that those protocols were followed in relation to these contracts.

I know that the provider who is making these allegations is a provider who did not get a contract to the same extent that they did previously. They were awarded some contractual work, but they did not get much as they were getting previously. If I understand correctly—I am sure my director-general will correct me if I am wrong—in relation to what they were contracted for, they voluntarily withdrew from that and we have had to find other providers in the area to do that work.

As I say, in relation to the one cent contract allegation, the contracts are made up of a whole lot of different elements and services that are provided. Each contract tenderer puts forward their model of fees. Some put up a lump sum fee and do not charge for mileage at all, or might charge one cent for mileage, because they have an up-front fee component. Others might charge per mileage. I suspect that is where the one cent allegations come from, because they all tender on different bases. There are some up-front lump sums. They might notionally charge one cent per kilometre, because the fees are all up-front.

There are other elements to that contract. There is no doubt that we are not getting a service for free from anyone. We are paying for these services. As I have just said, those costs are going up and they are expected to go up even higher just due to the shortage of qualified pathologists and the need to transport bodies to services for coronial autopsies.

My department is very confident, through the probity adviser process, that we have value for money and quality out of the contracts that we have entered into with the department. I should say that it is the role of the Coroners Court of Queensland to investigate any complaints in relation to those contracts, which they do.

**CHAIR:** Could I ask the member for Macalister to ask the next question?

**Mrs McMAHON:** With reference to page 11 of the SDS, can the Attorney-General update the committee on the government's tackling alcohol fuelled violence program?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for Macalister for her question. I am very proud of the work that the government has done in tackling alcohol fuelled violence in our community. It is an important area. Sadly, we have seen loss of life, sometimes those of very young people. No loss of life is acceptable, but we have seen young kids just getting into adulthood losing their lives because of alcohol fuelled violence in our communities. That is why the government chose to take the action it did, which is reducing the liquor available hours to 3 am in our safe night out precincts and to 2 am in the rest of our communities outside of the precincts. We stopped new approvals of takeaway liquor stores selling liquor after 10 pm; banned the sale, or supply, of rapid intoxication drinks after midnight; commenced the mandatory ID scanning from 10 pm at regulated premises; reduced the maximum number of temporary late night extended hours permits from 12 to six per calendar year and established strict eligibility criteria; and enabled licensees to stay open beyond last drinks time to provide other services to break that nexus with it all being about the consumption of alcohol. Our tackling alcohol fuelled violence policy is based on evidence and best practice in reducing the harm and cost of alcohol fuelled violence to individuals and their families while delivering economic benefits to the state.

This government has supported a number of social marketing campaigns, including What's your relationship with alcohol?, support for Danny Green's coward punch campaign, the be safe and watch your mate schoolies campaign and the Mates Motel and Dry Driver salute campaigns against drink-drivers. My department has also developed campaigns to assist liquor licensees fulfil their obligations, such as *Scan in for a safe night out* and *Behind the bar* videos resulting from Mystery Shopper research.

Queensland's licensed premises are continuing to thrive. When we heard that these laws will see our tourism damaged, that we will see our businesses close, can I say that the complete opposite has occurred, as we expected, as we said at the time based on evidence in other jurisdictions, particularly New South Wales but internationally as well. I am pleased to say that, in Queensland, the number of licensed premises has increased from 8,070 in June 2017 to 8,408 as at 30 June 2018. Licensed premises in safe night out precincts have also increased by three per cent over the same period. We have more licensed venues in our safe night out precincts, we have more licensed venues across the state and tourism is booming in Queensland.

What does that mean? We can grow our economy, we can support small business and at the same time create a safer environment in which to go out at night and enjoy our precincts. For those of us who have children who have just turned 18, we can be more confident that, when they go out for a night out, they are going to come home safe as well. None of us can guarantee that, but we have an obligation to put in place measures that will reduce those risks.

We will never be able to measure how many lives have been saved by this but, even if it is one, it is absolutely worth it. My director-general and I have been out and we have been subject to the scanners. We have experienced it ourselves to see how the system is working. Despite what we hear reported from time to time, people are lining up outside of clubs waiting to be scanned happy, content, enjoying the night out. It is not causing aggravation, it is not causing concerns, or congestion. I will have to say—and I do not go to nightclubs very often anymore—that people lined up outside of nightclubs before ID scanners started and they will line up outside of nightclubs now, because venues reach capacity and venues will still, and should, and are obliged to, monitor who is coming in. The ID scanners are not just about stopping people on banning orders; it is also a great way of ensuring that people are legitimately 18 years or older when they are walking into those venues to drink.

We are very proud of the initiatives that we have introduced. To reinforce our commitment to evidence based policy, all of these initiatives will form part of an independent review of the initiatives that is underway. It will be a two-year evaluation report. That is expected in October this year.

**Ms McMILLAN:** With reference to page 11 of the SDS, can the Attorney-General advise how the Office of Fair Trading in her department is helping protect Queensland consumers?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for Mansfield for her question. There has been some discussion about the work of the Office of Fair Trading already today in some of the questions. The work they do in keeping our community safe and advising them of how to better protect themselves from scams as well is really important. The Office of Fair Trading provides advice, educates traders on their responsibilities, resolves marketplace disputes, licenses a range of occupations, registers not-for-profit entities, investigates unfair business practices and takes enforcement action where necessary. I can advise the member and the other committee members that, in 2017-18, the Office of Fair Trading finalised 15,230 complaints and obtained \$8.1 million in redress for consumers. I commend the Office of Fair Trading for its responsive service.

Each year, it conducts a program of proactive compliance spot checks on regulated and non-regulated industries, such as motor dealers and second-hand dealers and real estate agents. As part of the 2017-18 proactive compliance, there have been checks of art galleries, museums, warehouses and retail traders selling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and craft products. They were conducted in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games to ensure that traders were accurately representing their products.

For those international tourists, those interstate tourists who want to buy genuine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander items, whether it is didgeridoos, boomerangs, artworks or anything else, we need to make sure that they are not being provided with something that has been made elsewhere and is being sold as if it were a legitimate item. That is not just important for the consumer; it is extremely important for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. I know that recently there has been a parliamentary committee at a Commonwealth level about that as well to make sure that we are not letting these products into the country, that we are having those products made here and we are protecting our Indigenous artists.

The Office of Fair Trading, in doing that, developed and distributed a fact sheet for the industry about how to avoid making false and misleading statements under the consumer law about Indigenous art and craft products and 156 compliance checks were completed. I am pleased to say that they identified issues with nine traders involving 17 outlets. The issues were primarily detected on less expensive mass produced products. It is a small number, but it was important that they were identified and addressed. Given the nature of the issues and the traders' willingness to immediately work towards compliance, the Office of Fair Trading issued each trader with a compliance advice letter. That is a great outcome.

I mentioned briefly the Do Not Knock initiative. This is about reducing the detriment suffered by consumers resulting from activities of unscrupulous door-to-door traders targeting remote Indigenous communities. The Do Not Knock initiative involves the erection of roadside signage at the entry of the community reminding door-to-door traders of their legal obligations and community members of their consumer rights. Engagement with consumers is also a cornerstone of the program's success. I can advise the members that the program has been implemented in Wujal Wujal, Yarrabah, Hope Vale, Palm Island and Woorabinda and other communities have expressed interest in the program.

The Office of Fair Trading regularly works with other agencies to address issues affecting consumers. Also, the Office of Fair Trading became aware of an increasing trend of real estate agents not lodging bonds with the Residential Tenancy Authority within required time frames. A joint operation, Operation Bond, was established with the RTA to identify noncompliant agents who threatened the integrity of the industry and caused significant consumer detriment. In some cases significant misapplication of trust money was identified by the Office of Fair Trading and a number of investigations are continuing and enforcement action may ensue.

Also, of course, with the Ekka coming up they always have to inspect the annual show bags and ensure safety compliance of the show bags. With the Ekka coming up, the Office of Fair Trading will conduct their annual Ekka show bag safety blitz, performing safety checks on toys and goods found in the show bags.

Before I end, can I just say how responsive my department is when it comes to scams. We know how easy it is for people to fall for scams. They look so legitimate nowadays. Just a couple of days ago a regular panellist rang ABC Radio here in Brisbane during the afternoon program and said they had received an email from Justice saying that they were selected for jury service and asking them to open the link. The ABC contacted the Department of Justice and Attorney-General media relations unit to confirm whether it was legitimate. The Queensland court service was able to confirm very quickly the

email was not connected to our Queensland courts. The email tells recipients they have been selected for jury service and asks them to click on a link to register personal information to receive their jury number. No-one would think that would be a scam. Who would send something out about jury service? This is the information they were asking for: name, date of birth, address, occupation, driver's licence information, passport information and an email address—a great way to steal someone's identification. The pages tell them they will be fined \$1,000 or ordered to perform community service if they do not comply.

Thanks to the ABC alerting us to this, we were able to put out an alert straightaway. I thank the Queensland Police Service, who also put up a scam alert on the same day. I can now advise that yesterday we were advised the federal cybersecurity unit have issued a take-down notice to the hosting provider as well as the domain registrant and Solid Tops Limited. They have also added the URL to their malicious URLs feed and monitoring.

All of that came from a caller to an ABC program. We managed to check the validity of it, get the alert out there, have other agencies supporting that alert and have the federal cybersecurity unit seek to issue a take-down notice. I thank not only the caller and the ABC but also my department for being so responsive, as we want government to be, by acting on this so quickly. I say to anyone listening: please do not open an email like this if you are unsure it is legitimate. Ring up a government department, follow up and just check that it is genuine before you open those links. Thank you, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Attorney, in reference to pages 4 and 5 of the SDS, can you please advise of any initiatives, strategies or programs that your department is undertaking to support Queenslanders' engagement with and access to the justice system?

**Mrs D'ATH:** Thank you, Chair, for that question. One of the important initiatives that we have implemented is Court Link. Consistent with the Queensland Drug and Specialist Courts Review final report recommendations to build a range of interventions to address drug related crime, a new court referral and support program, Court Link, was established. As we said at the time we announced and established the new Drug and Alcohol Court, the report said to establish one court first, to ensure you establish it where there is all the support services around and to get the model right before you try to extend it, because if you extend too quickly that is when these initiatives fail. It also said that there needs to be more programs for court referral and assistance to people who are at risk.

Court Link commenced in Brisbane in November 2017 and I am pleased to say it commenced in Cairns on 25 June this year. It is proposed to expand Court Link to Southport, Ipswich and Mount Isa in the 2018-19 year. Court Link assists defendants to address their underlying causes of offending behaviour. Professionally qualified Court Link officers assess referred participants, taking into account their circumstances when providing support. Court Link provides targeted bail support in the form of individualised case management to medium- and high-risk/need offenders with issues relating to matters such as drug and alcohol use, housing instability and mental health, which we know are key underlying factors when it comes to offending and recidivism.

Court Link support includes referrals to relevant treatment providers. What is important about this program is its individualised case management. That is what has been missing in the past and that is what Court Link is going to be so beneficial for. Court Link officers also support the court to monitor each participant's progress. This targeted and individualised service includes providing information about the circumstances of the participant to the court so that the court gets more information about what the individual is doing to address their particular needs, whether it is drug and alcohol, housing or mental health, and ensures equal access to justice for all coming before the courts. That is a really important initiative being rolled out in areas of the state.

Another initiative I want to mention is an SMS trial. It started in Mackay in 2016 and it is being piloted and evaluated at the moment. The Mackay Magistrates Court is sending SMS text message reminders about court appearances to adult defendants on bail. SMS reminders are sent to defendants who are on bail one day prior to their next scheduled court appearance. The pilot aims to reduce the number of warrants issued for defendants on bail who fail to appear for court appearances and reduce the number of offences of failing to appear while on bail. Between 1 June 2016 and 31 March 2018 an estimated 5,500 SMS messages were sent to defendants as part of the pilot. The pilot is currently being evaluated by the University of Queensland. This evaluation will inform future work, including whether to roll out SMS reminder messages for all adult defendants on bail throughout Queensland as well as other types of court events in other court jurisdictions.

The early data I have seen indicates that there is a decline in the number failing to appear. What we need to evaluate is whether that is directly linked to the SMS or there is just a trend of declining

anyway in order to work out whether this measure works. In relation to notifying people of court appearances and when they are due, one thing most people have is a phone, and having text messages reminding them they have a court appearance certainly increases the potential for them to appear and will reduce the time involved in the courts, police and everyone else having to follow up on breaches and issue warrants. It is a great initiative. I will be very eager to see what the evaluation shows as to whether it is something that we can expand across the state.

**CHAIR:** I ask the member for Toowoomba South to ask the next question.

**Mr JANETZKI:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney, the QFCC released its review into the blue card and foster care system following the tragic death of Tiahleigh Palmer in July 2017. That report found that people commencing work while waiting for a working with children check results in a heightened risk. How many people are working with children in Queensland right now while their blue card application is pending approval?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. Can I say that on any given day there are about 720,000 Queenslanders who have a blue card or are applicants. When I say 'applicants', there is an overlap. It is difficult to give an exact figure of applicants who do not already have a blue card because obviously they need to be renewed every three years or they may be changing from being a volunteer to working in employment with blue cards. There are 720,000 who have blue cards—over 699,000 who have a blue card and, as I say, the remainder are applicants but some of those applicants will cross over with the holders. There are about 32,000 organisations that we engage with that either employ people who require blue cards or have volunteers who require blue cards. Can I clarify that the member was asking how many are applying right now?

**Mr JANETZKI:** How many people are working with children right now pending approval of their blue card applications?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I would have to follow up on that number for the member. I am happy to take that on notice and find out what the number is. As I was saying, there are about 720,000 currently with blue cards or are applicants. There is this view that there are a whole lot of people out there who are engaged with children who may not have a blue card. That is just not accurate. It might surprise people to know that one in six adults—not even one in six working adults but one in six adults—in Queensland actually has a blue card. They are the numbers. That is why our system is held in such high regard across the state. The QFCC report showed that we have a very strong system of working with children checks in this state. Of course it can be improved on, and that is what the QFCC have recommended. We are working on implementing those recommendations. The numbers of people who would be in work and awaiting the outcome are not huge, but I will get the exact figure for the member.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Attorney, the Labor government took to the 2017 election campaign a policy of 'no card, no start'. Why has that not commenced and when will it do so?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member. Work to establish 'no card, no start' has commenced. This requires an entire new database to be established. If you look across all of my portfolio, across government as a whole or across the private sector you will see that no-one can establish a brand-new database overnight, because you have to get it right. What we are talking about here is child safety. You cannot flick the switch and have a new system without making sure that everything is in place and the system is going to work, before you move away from the old system.

The old system—it is a very mature system that has been in place for a number of years—is almost solely paper based. All applications are paper based. We are going from a pure paper based system. I have been to Blue Card and I have had a look at the volumes of paper coming through. As I say, there are 720,000 blue card holders and applicants in Queensland. It is all paper based.

We have to establish a system, which this year's budget does—\$17 million over three years—to establish this online platform. The online platform is not simply 'What do we do now? Let's create an online system'; it is to also take into account the recommendations of the QFCC, recommendations of the royal commission and other recommendations that have been made to look at broadening the reportable obligations—obligations on organisations—as to who must have a blue card and when you need to report on the changes.

Also as part of this new system, for it to work, we need to decouple the blue card from the start of employment. Right now, when someone goes to apply for a job where they are working with children and they need a blue card, that is when they apply because they actually have to be sponsored by the employer. They do not walk in the door already with a blue card. They might have one as a volunteer

but they do not have one for working with children necessarily. If you take that system to what it is now then there will be delays, more than there are now, in the start of employment.

I have heard commentary that the reason we have committed to no-card no-start is that somehow this has just been a glitch or an error that someone has suddenly identified. That is not accurate. This is the way that the system was set up. Whether it is at Little Athletics, a surf-lifesaving club, Scouts—all of those sporting groups—if you want to volunteer to work with children, you cannot start volunteering without a blue card. If you want to start a business that involves children, you have to get a blue card first. Already, that is no-card no-start. We are just talking about those who apply for a job and need a blue card. The system was always designed so that they could initially start work first—

**Mr JANETZKI:** Attorney-General, I am hearing lots of reasons for the delay and excuses. I am looking for a date when the policy will actually start. The safety of Queensland's children depends on this.

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba South, please do not interrupt the Attorney when she is giving her answer. Allow her that appropriate courtesy.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I am sure the member wants to understand the system that is in place and what needs to occur, so that when he makes public statements he does so accurately. Any statement that this was just a glitch shows that the person making those statements does not understand how the system was designed in the first place.

We have to get this right because it will have particular impact in regional and remote areas. If you cannot start work until you have that blue card, you have businesses that cannot employ people and you have individuals not being able to take up a job. We know for a fact—which is why it was part of the design in the first place—that that has a particular impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Having said that, we have absolutely committed to no-card no-start, which is why there is \$17 million in this year's budget. We have started the work. It is a whole new platform. Thirty-two thousand organisations have to be involved in this changeover. We have organisations on our implementation panel that are working through how we are doing it and the time frames.

To answer, when will it start: it will start in approximately 18 months. We have to design the system. We have to go to tender. We have to commence the system in parallel to test it, because you have to make sure the system is working before you stop using the old system. We all know what goes wrong if you do not do that properly. It is about making sure we run the system in parallel. Once we are absolutely convinced the system is working, we will switch over. We are committed to doing it. This budget shows our commitment with \$17 million. We are working with the implementation panel, which is government agencies and non-government organisations, to deliver on that commitment.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Attorney, media reports from 21 February 2016 show that criminal gang Mongrel Mob established its presence in Queensland, yet you have declared it an identified organisation only today. Why has it taken so long to act?

**Mrs D'ATH:** We act and I act in relation to making recommendations to the Governor in Council on declarations based on the advice and requests coming directly from the Queensland Police Service. The Queensland Police Service contact the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, advise that they have sufficient evidence to show that an organisation is establishing or attempting to establish itself in Queensland, and then they make the request that it be declared. I can advise that the request in relation to Mongrel Mob from QPS was made only recently. I approved that request and, as I say, it is going to Governor in Council. More than likely it has gone through Governor in Council now.

Having said that, that does not mean members of Mongrel Mob have been running around the state without any action being taken against them. In fact, as I have said before, a number of individual members have already been charged with offences in this state by the Queensland Police Service. This is about that extra measure to ensure that where they are trying now to show a presence—and we know colours are important in intimidation and recruitment tactics and in trying to claim their turf in any particular town—this is another step in making sure they cannot do that. It is a very important tool for the Queensland Police Service to be able to use in that.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Referring to page 4 of the SDS, the key objectives of the department fail to mention serious and organised crime. Why is serious and organised crime not a priority for your department?

**CHAIR:** That is an imputation. I rule the question out of order.

**Mr LISTER:** Point of order. What was the imputation? Can you describe it?

**CHAIR:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr LISTER:** I think we would like to know.

**CHAIR:** The wording was 'why have you failed' or words to that effect.

**Mr LISTER:** We have advice from the Clerk that it has to be an imputation against an individual, not the government as a whole.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I think the word was used.

**CHAIR:** It is also seeking an opinion. I will give you the opportunity to rephrase the question.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I will move on, Chair. I refer the Attorney to the secret 2018 report *Organisational structure and workforce climate review for the Coroners Court of Queensland*.

**CHAIR:** I am sorry to interrupt, member for Toowoomba South, but could you repeat the question?

**Mr JANETZKI:** My question is with respect to the partial release of the 2018 report *Organisational structure and workforce climate review for the Coroners Court of Queensland*. This report was released only after an RTI intervention from the *Australian* newspaper. Attorney, when the *Australian* applied for the report to be released through right to information, why were 56 of the 76 pages kept secret and only 20 pages, which reflected on what had gone well, were released?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I cannot speak to the decisions of the RTI unit because as the minister and Attorney-General I have no role to play whatsoever in the decisions of RTI applications, nor should I. It would be completely inappropriate for me to get involved in those applications and give advice to the RTI as to what it should or should not release in relation to those documents.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Can you reflect on what steps you have asked to be implemented in respect of addressing the concerns raised in that report?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I will ask my director-general to speak to that, as it was an internal reference by the department in relation to that organisational review. I will pass over to David Mackie.

**Mr Mackie:** I repeat the Attorney's answer in the context that the RTI unit is independent and makes those decisions. It is usually based on people's privacy. I think that review incorporated consultation and meetings with staff members. It was to ensure that anonymity and privacy were protected.

My understanding is that the report has made a number of recommendations, including improving the services for customers and stakeholders; improving leadership, communication and governance structures in the office; improving strategic planning; and ensuring the organisational structure best supports Coroners to investigate reportable deaths effectively. The Coroners Court itself has already implemented a number of recommendations. That includes the permanent appointment of a director of the office, which I believe was an acting position for some time; allocating six additional positions until 30 June 2019 to address current demands on the Queensland coronial services, including a change manager to oversee the implementation of recommendations; and establishing a change management steering committee that meets monthly. Its membership includes the State Coroner and the executive director of Magistrates Court services. Most of those recommendations will be implemented over time around structure, looking at role descriptions was another one, and establishing regular communication channels between management and staff through fortnightly meetings.

The report also noted the dedication of everyone who works there, from senior management down. Obviously, it is a dedicated workplace where they are trying to make sure that Queenslanders are getting delivered effective coronial services. Occasionally all workplaces have issues, in both the public and private sectors. My department certainly values respectful and ethical workplaces for its 3,600 people in workplaces around Queensland. Certainly that is our focus from the top down. If there are issues, such as occur in any workplace, we respond quickly. This review was obviously to ensure that we have a healthy workplace in Coroners and we will be moving forward with the implementation of those recommendations.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Thank you, Director-General.

**CHAIR:** I ask the member for Mansfield to ask the next question.

**Ms McMILLAN:** In reference to pages 4 and 6 of the SDS, could the Attorney-General please advise how the government is delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to increase their access to justice?



**Mrs D'ATH:** The Palaszczuk government is delivering better services for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through culturally appropriate services such as our Murri courts and restorative justice programs. The government has also supported the development of Law Yarn, which I was very pleased to launch in recent times in Cairns. That is a resource to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to identify their legal needs.

As members may know, the Murri courts offer a court process that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. That is done by encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, including through our community justice groups, to participate in Murri courts in 14 locations across Queensland. I acknowledge the tremendous work that our community justice groups do. The Murri courts involve participants meeting with elders or respected persons to address their offending through referral to treatment and support services and participation in cultural groups. Elders or respected persons also provide the court with support and submissions regarding each participant's cultural and personal circumstances. Providing a culturally appropriate court process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and defendants increases their access to justice.

The restorative justice programs operate in two remote discrete communities, that is, Mornington Island and Aurukun. Both programs aim to reduce the level of violence in the community by establishing a locally based and operated culturally inclusive mediation and peacekeeping service to build local capacity to resolve disputes peacefully. Mediators and nominated elders facilitate mediations between disputing parties, including intra- and interfamily disputes. Those programs contribute to reducing the contact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with the justice system.

Importantly, the contribution of elders and respected persons in both the Murri courts and the restorative justice programs instils trust in the justice system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. People who are vulnerable may not realise that they have legal needs or may not ask for help with their legal needs. A legal health check is a resource that enables lawyers and non-legal professionals to identify their legal problems. A legal health check that is narrative based, community connected, not reliant on written materials and uses Indigenous iconography is an extremely valuable resource to increase access to justice.

In June 2017, the Queensland government allocated \$300,000 to LawRight for its legal health check to be tailored for Indigenous Australians. As I said, I was very pleased to recently launch the resulting Law Yarn, which is a tool that promotes conversation and collaboration across the legal, health and human services sectors to help clients experience a broad range of needs. Law Yarn also enhances conversations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their health care workers and their legal representatives to assist in understanding and addressing interrelated and complex legal needs.

Ultimately this is about addressing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system and to make our communities safer by reducing offending and recidivism rates amongst the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I am very proud, as I know my director-general is, for us to be the ministerial champions of Mossman Gorge. We go up there and meet with the communities and all stakeholders from local, state and federal government who all come to the table and work with the community to help improve their outcomes. It has been a real pleasure to work with the community and to continue to do so.

In acknowledging that, I have to say that the scarf that I am wearing today is the artwork of the Aboriginal women of Mossman Gorge. They have been able to have their artwork turned into beautiful apparel that is sold in shops. I recognise them. I want to acknowledge the wonderful women at Mossman Gorge.

**Mrs McMAHON:** Following on from the question on notice and in reference to page 30 of the SDS, can the Attorney-General please advise of any initiatives being undertaken by the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council regarding sentencing outcomes and impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

**Mrs D'ATH:** The Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council has made one of its principal focuses to contribute to efforts to understand and address the drivers of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our criminal justice system in Queensland. Under section 201 of the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the council membership must include at least one member who is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. Importantly, on 13 July this year the council opened up an expression of interest process to recruit six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals to form an advisory panel to guide and assist the council to deliver on this principal focus. The membership of the advisory panel is intended to be as representative as possible of the diversity of the Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland. Expressions of interest will close on 15 August. If you know of anyone who may want to apply, please encourage them to do so. The panel will be meeting for the first time in September.

The council has undertaken a pilot community engagement project in the community of Cunnamulla and has worked from an evidence base to understand that one key issue in this community is a lack of understanding of the conditions and requirements of sentencing orders, which has potentially contributed to high breach rates for a range of justice orders. The council has since produced the *Queensland Sentencing Guide*, which aims to address this particular gap in understanding. The last phase of the Cunnamulla pilot community engagement program will be to produce a series of fact sheets in easy English specifically targeted at people with limited literacy skills to aid in understanding reporting and other requirements.

As I am sure members are aware, I issued a terms of reference to the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council in October 2017. Those terms of reference asked the council to consider the 2016 Queensland Parole System Review final report about the lack of complexity of community based sentencing options available to a court and the likely adverse impact this has on the prison population and the need to improve Queensland's sentencing laws. The council is due to report back to me on that on 30 April 2019.

The terms of reference also require consideration of the impact of any recommendation the council may make on the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system. The council's review will consider the Australian Law Reform Commission's December 2017 final report, titled *Pathways to justice—Inquiry into the incarceration rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*, which made a number of recommendations to improve access to community based sentencing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council's work also includes producing statistical and research papers in which the council routinely presents disaggregated data by age, gender and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status to inform the community and criminal justice stakeholders about sentencing outcomes and trends for particular groups. I want to thank the members of QSAC and the secretariat for the work they have done and are continuing to do to guide the important policy and legislative framework and also to better inform the community around sentencing.

**CHAIR:** In reference to pages 5, 21 and 23 of the SDS, can the Attorney-General please advise how the Palaszczuk government is supporting the modernisation of court facilities across Queensland?

**Mrs D'ATH:** It is an ongoing activity to ensure the modernisation of our court facilities. As I travel around this state I see that we have some incredible court buildings—historic buildings and heritage listed buildings in some cases. They are beautiful but not purpose built. They are certainly not purpose built for today's needs. There are limitations as to how much we can modify some of those buildings. We have done an incredible job in managing to balance those old buildings with the modern needs of our community.

In the 2017-18 budget the government increased funding to update and expand our audiovisual capability in the criminal justice system. This is a \$31.6 million investment over five years, reducing to \$4.2 million per annum ongoing over 2022-23 for replacement. That means that as at 30 June this year 34 facilities were upgraded to the latest equipment in terms of audiovisual technologies. The existing audiovisual facilities have been updated for district courts in Cairns, Gladstone, Gympie, Ipswich, Kingaroy, Mackay, Southport and Toowoomba. Similarly, audiovisual facilities for magistrates courts have been updated in Brisbane, Cooktown, Gladstone, Ipswich, Kingaroy, Pine Rivers and Sandgate. This funding has also enabled us to upgrade the audiovisual equipment in three of QCAT's mediation rooms.

Facilities have had their audiovisual capability upgraded to include touchscreen controlled integrated videoconferencing in the magistrates courts at Beenleigh, Cairns, Cleveland, Gladstone, Gympie, Maroochydore, Southport and Toowoomba. Similarly, increased capability as a result of upgrades has also occurred in the Supreme Court at Mackay, the District Court at Ipswich, the QEII Courts of Law and in one of QCAT's mediation rooms.

Our ongoing investment in videoconferencing systems allows the percentage of in-custody court appearances to keep pace with the increase in matters. Committee members may be very interested to know that over 70 per cent of in-custody defendants now appear via VC systems which means less time for transporting defendants, police not having to be occupied with transporting defendants between corrective services facilities and the courts, and improved safety. This is a real improvement in efficiency and results in more time being available for our courts to conduct other matters before them.

Videoconferencing also provides special witnesses and vulnerable persons with flexible options for appearing. Members heard me talk earlier about prerecorded video evidence for child witnesses and remote appearances from secure locations other than courtrooms for special witnesses such as domestic and family violence and sexual assault victims. This additional funding has also enabled the provision of new equipment for the playback of evidence in modern digital formats that benefit stakeholders, legal practitioners and prosecuting agencies and Legal Aid Queensland.

As far as courthouse upgrades are concerned, I can advise that the Southport courthouse obviously underwent a significant upgrade with the new specialist domestic and family violence refurbishment project, which was an investment of \$2.6 million, with completion in September 2017. Some of the things included were separate access and egress points for the aggrieved and respondents, separate waiting areas and interview rooms, new registry staff facilities, including a service counter especially for DV support, videoconferencing, a place for children for victims who have to come to court with their children, and additional state government security work.

Kingaroy courthouse has gone through an incredible upgrade. I think it is downplaying it to call it an upgrade. Anyone who has been to the Kingaroy courthouse will know that it looks like a brand-new courthouse. It reached completion in November 2017, with a budget of \$5.3 million. The project included new ramps and lift for assisting people with disability, refurbishment of the existing courtroom, construction of a second courtroom to meet the demands of both the district and magistrates courts, a new conference room, holding cells, meeting rooms, solicitor and interview rooms, videoconferencing, secure access to court for the judiciary and vulnerable witnesses, upgrades to the jury rooms, construction of vulnerable witness and Protect All Children Today rooms, toilet facilities as well as secure detainee access direct from the watch-house into the court's secure dock.

I can advise the committee that for the Rockhampton courthouse an investment of \$12 million has been made to upgrade the courthouse. Some \$6.5 million of that funding has been allocated for works this financial year. The project tender was called on 18 July this year and will close on 15 August. Construction is forecast to commence in October and reach practical completion in October next year. The works will include full external refurbishment including windows, roof cladding, an access ramp for people with disabilities, enclosed balconies and rectification of water ingress issues. There were major water issues in relation to that building.

For the Beenleigh courthouse there is investment of \$11 million for the upgrade for the specialist domestic and family violence court. There is \$3.7 million this financial year. The project will go to tender in September this year. Construction is forecast to commence late 2018 and reach completion by late 2019. The additional magistrate we have funded for the Beenleigh specialist court cannot start until we build another courtroom. That is due to demand at that courthouse. As soon as this work is completed we will be able to employ an additional magistrate at Beenleigh. In the meantime, there are other works that are being done to support the specialist domestic and family violence court listing.

Lastly, for the Townsville courthouse there is investment of \$9 million. This is for an upgrade for the specialist DV court. There is \$3.7 million allocated this financial year. The project goes to tender next month. Construction is forecast to commence in November and reach practical completion in November 2019. As is scheduled to occur with the Beenleigh courthouse, the upgrade at the Townsville courthouse will include a new domestic and family violence courtroom, a safe space, separate secure access, an updated registry, a secure entrance, external lifts and stairs, interview rooms and stakeholder office facilities.

Leading up to the point of going to tender, there has been a lot of consultation with stakeholders to make sure we get this right. Once you start these constructions you cannot easily modify courthouses and the security around them. We wanted to make sure we consulted broadly with the judiciary and legal stakeholders to make sure we get the planning of the specialist DV courts in Townsville and Beenleigh right.

**CHAIR:** I understand the member for Maiwar has one further question.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I have a question for the Attorney-General regarding recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and specifically recommendations 89 to 95 of the redress and civil litigation report. These are the only recommendations noted in the government response as being for further consideration. Given this response and the lack of any government response to its related 2016 issues paper on the widening of the removal of limitation periods for civil litigation of this kind, what is the government doing to see these recommendations implemented as soon as possible?

**Mr LISTER:** Point of order, Mr Chair: the crossbenchers are getting a disproportionate amount of time for questioning here. Normally you would give—

**CHAIR:** That is not a point of order.

**Mrs D'ATH:** In relation to the question on the royal commission, as the member appreciates there are over 400 recommendations in that report. I appreciate the member has taken me to specific recommendations. I do not have those recommendations in front of me at the moment. I am pretty sure I know which ones he is particularly talking about.

There is work being done on these recommendations currently. There is a significant body of work being done. As the member knows, we have already removed the statute of limitations when it comes to child sexual abuse. We have modified our model litigant guidelines to ensure that we are taking into account and working with victims who come forward to ensure they experience the least trauma possible in going through this process.

We have signed up to the national redress scheme and committed \$500 million to fund that. We are working with the Commonwealth's Attorney-General's department. The lead is being taken by the Minister for Child Safety in relation to the royal commission.

There is a lot of work to be done. It would not be accurate to say that there is inaction or there is no work being done in relation to those areas. It is a significant body of work legislatively and also at agency level across multiple agencies. Some of these recommendations are also contingent on work at a national level to have consistency—that is, so we do not have different states doing different things.

My response to the member is that work is underway on these recommendations. I have committed to the stakeholders to further engage with them when we are at the point of putting forward further legislative reform to address recommendations of the royal commission and to get their feedback on those proposed recommendations. It is certainly underway. There is a significant body of work, not just around the royal commission recommendation but a lot of interaction between the royal commission recommendations and the QFCC recommendations.

There are 409 recommendations, of which my agency is taking the lead on 108. There are another 16 that we are involved in or supporting. Then there are other recommendations that other agencies are involved in. It is an inquiry that took five years and it is going to take some time for all of the governments to work together. We are absolutely committed and genuine about seeing the work done on the recommendations of the royal commission. The government has released its government response on the royal commission, and we understand the importance of working through these recommendations as quickly as we can. As I say, I have given a commitment to those stakeholders that I will come back to them on those legislative reforms and discuss draft legislation with them.

**Mr JANETZKI:** My question is to the Attorney. The 2016-17 QFCC annual report was tabled only five months after it was received by the Premier. I also note that the Attorney-General had a copy of the report for nearly a month before it was released to the public. Can the Attorney advise the committee whether the Premier or her office was consulted on the timing of the release of this report?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I can advise that it is not an uncommon practice to simply advise the Premier's office when we intend on releasing reports. As far as the timing of reports is concerned, I know that the Premier was asked this question on Tuesday and gave a detailed response as to the timing of this report in that the QFCC provided their annual report during caretaker mode during the last state general election. As the member is fully aware, the government was formed in mid-December. There were machinery-of-government changes which saw the QFCC transfer to my portfolio in February. I received a brief in relation to the report in March. After consideration, I signed the report and I released the report in April, which is within the statutory time frames for tabling of reports.

It is not unusual, and I am sure the member would not expect me just to sign off on reports without considering those reports. I have about 30 annual reports that I consider every year and release. I believe that that time frame is more than reasonable. If that member is critical of that, the member might want to go back and do some research on the history of reports by the former child safety minister when they were in government and how long it took to table reports.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Just to clarify, the timing of the release of this report in the middle of the Commonwealth Games was not discussed between your office and the Premier's office?

**Mrs D'ATH:** The tabling of the report and when reports are tabled are my decision. I happily sit here today and say that the decision to release it in April, which happened to coincide with the Commonwealth Games, is my decision. I am sure the member is not proposing that I should have sat on it and delayed the tabling of that report so it did not occur when the Commonwealth Games were

on. I did not stop working when the Commonwealth Games were on. I continued to do my work, consider my briefs, consider the reports and table them.

**Mr McDONALD:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Alcohol related violence is a huge issue for our community. I note the answer to question on notice No. 12 where it is quite apparent that the budget for the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation has been cut by \$1.2 million and a loss of 12 full-time-equivalent inspectors. How can the government satisfactorily address alcohol related violence by reducing the budget for the regulator and their front-line services?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question, and his question is inaccurate. When the member says that the budget has been cut, I am assuming he is not asserting that we have put off 12 regulators in this year's budget because that is not the case. What the budget shows is that we have continued on the funding in relation to the inspectors who were put on for further enforcement and compliance around the tackling alcohol fuelled violence initiatives. As the review of the tackling alcohol fuelled violence initiatives is not completed yet and it is due in October this year, a decision was made to extend that funding for another 12 months while we receive that report and evaluate it to see what the future needs are of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation and their number of staffing of inspectors.

What the member is talking about is forward estimates that show that the temporary funding is extended for another year. We will evaluate over the next year what the needs are of the OLGR going forward. To say that this year's budget has been cut and to say that there are 12 staff who have lost their jobs this year is just not accurate. We will see what the evaluation report actually shows as to what our needs are going forward and the outcomes of the initiatives that were put in place about alcohol fuelled violence.

**Mr LISTER:** Attorney-General, I refer to—

**CHAIR:** Excuse me. I ask Mr Stephen Andrew, the member for Mirani, if he has a question.

**Mr ANDREW:** Yes, I do. My question is to the Attorney-General and concerns the issues with ice in the rural regions. I would like to know if there is anything that the government was looking at to stiffen the penalties for dealers or people who are pushing this bad drug? I am constantly getting calls about it. I would not mind knowing whether there is something that we can do when it comes to the law to make it harder for these people to operate.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for his question. There is no doubt that in the communities there is concern about the dealing of drugs and trafficking of drugs in our state and in our country. It is an international problem. Every country is tackling it. We know ice is prevalent.

Everywhere I go when I talk to our magistrates they are talking about ice. People have a preconceived idea of who the users of ice are, but the fact is that they are young people, they are well-paid people in the community, they are highly respected people in the community, they are people who are bored in regional towns who are unemployed and they are people who are paid well, who work in the mines and who fly-in fly-out. Recent examples I have had in our regional towns is of middle-aged women who are well known in their communities, who are highly respected and regarded, who have raised their families, yet they have gone to a party or a function and thought, 'I'll live a little. How bad can it be if I just try it?' This drug is so dangerous. It is very addictive. Even if you have used it once you can have psychotic episodes for some time later.

The Premier has acknowledged this, and that is why we have released the ice strategy and we have consulted widely. I understand the member's desire to increase sentencing. Our sentencing penalties are quite high already when it comes to trafficking and dealing. In fact, as the member is probably aware, we even extended our banning orders for tackling alcohol fuelled violence to drug related offences because we do not want those people—whether they are working on their own or in concert with others—going into our venues in our towns and dealing drugs to young people. We do not want them in our precincts at all.

The ice strategy that has been released shows that you cannot tackle this just by policing our way out of it. It is not just about higher sentences and more time in prison because eventually they get out. You have to look at the underlying factors. You also have to look at providing more support in health. I am sure that the health minister would happily address this issue. We need more investment in health and looking at ice from a health perspective and also mental health, because I see it a lot with our forensic orders in relation to the use of drugs and abuse of drugs. There is also the work that the police are doing and also what we are doing more broadly in the community. We have all seen the media reports about child safety and child protection and the use by families as well.

It is not our intention at the moment to focus particularly on or to seek to increase sentencing because we believe the sentences are already a deterrent. The problem is that those sorts of people who are willing to traffic ice are not in fear of going to prison. You could double the sentences but they are not deterred by the risk of going to prison. We need to do other things to start tackling ice. We need to better educate the community. If we can do anything, it is educate our community of any age: 'Just do not take the risk because if you start using ice your life will spiral out of control and the ripple effect in your family and in the community and the economic impact of ice is significant.' We need to better educate our community to not take the risk on this drug. An industry only exists like this because of demand. We have to stop people using and wanting to use ice. I thank the member for his question.

Chair, I do have some answers to some of the questions that have been taken on notice. In relation to the first question earlier today about the CCC receiving any complaints to investigate allegations of corruption from the Premier, I am advised that the CCC has received one notification from the Premier since 16 February 2015. In the same period the CCC has received 43 notifications from persons associated with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Notifications may raise one or more allegations. The CCC notes that complaints from the Premier are often received from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on the Premier's behalf.

I also want to correct the record where I said that the first Queensland Law Reform Commission report on privacy is due on 1 October 2019. The correct date is 1 July 2019.

In relation to the question from the member for Maiwar in relation to statistics around consent and mistake of fact being used as a defence, I have been advised that neither the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions nor courts hold this data. Information about what evidence is called or what defences are raised throughout the trial are dealt with by the courts on a case-by-case basis and not recorded in a central register. As I said earlier, I look forward to receiving the feedback from legal stakeholders about their experience and expertise in that area.

In relation to the question I think it was from the member for Toowoomba South in relation to how many people are working in Queensland while their blue card is pending approval, I can advise that as at today there are 6,471 persons in paid employment who have applied for a blue card and are awaiting the finalisation of their application. All of these persons are monitored by the Queensland Police Service for changes in their criminal history while their applications are pending. I note that the persons in volunteer employment cannot commence work until they are issued a blue card.

I think the only outstanding question will be from the member for Maiwar about the number of drug matters—the cost of running those matters. I will not be able to get that data to you during this committee hearing, but I have taken that on notice and I will get back to the committee.

**CHAIR:** I understand that the member for Southern Downs has one final question.

**Mr LISTER:** Attorney-General, how many Magistrates Court, District Court and Supreme Court judges have been appointed since the introduction of the new protocol for judicial appointments in July 2016?

**Mrs D'ATH:** There have been 34 vacancies considered as at 1 June 2018. The protocol came into place in July 2016. As at 1 June 2018, the panel has met 12 times and has considered 34 vacancies, so I have filled 34. I have appointed 34 in the Court of Appeal and the Supreme, District and Magistrates courts, as well as a senior judge administrator of the Supreme Court. There are two vacancies—the panel just met about a week ago—in the Magistrates Court in addition to that. The panel has met probably 13 times now for 36 vacancies, and there are two vacancies to be filled in the Magistrates Court currently.

**Mr LISTER:** How many of those appointments—

**CHAIR:** The time allocated—

**Mr LISTER:** No. I believe we have another 30 seconds. One minute will be enough. Attorney-General, how many of those appointments were made outside of the new arrangements for judicial appointments? How many were made without a recommendation by the Judicial Appointments Advisory Panel?

**Mrs D'ATH:** Outside of the panel there are some positions, as I noted in my question on notice, that do not go through the panel. That is the Planning and Environment Court, the Land Court, the Aboriginal Land Tribunal, the Childrens Court, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the Mental Health Court. The reason is that either those positions all get appointed from within the court—for example, District Court judges get appointed to the Planning and Environment Court, District Court judges get appointed to the Childrens Court, Supreme Court justices get appointed to the Mental

Health Court, magistrates get appointed to the Coroners Court and the QCAT president and deputy president come from the Supreme and District courts. All other vacancies, being the sessional, ordinary and senior members of QCAT, are advertised and filled in that way.

**Mr LISTER:** Can you tell us how many, Attorney-General?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I can. I think it was question on notice No. 18. Give me one minute to do my sums. Twenty-four positions do not sit under the protocol. That does not mean there is not consultation. There is consultation with the heads of jurisdiction because they come from within the court. It is not appropriate that an external panel considers which judge of the District Court gets appointed to the Planning and Environment Court. I do not have that involvement. The Chief Judge of the District Court would notify me that, of these District Court judges, he seeks for them to be appointed and declared Planning and Environment Court members, and I put that through Executive Council. The same applies for the Land Court, the Childrens Court and so forth. Every time I appoint new magistrates the Chief Magistrate will come back to me and say, 'Can you also appoint this magistrate as a Childrens Court magistrate?' and I put that through Governor in Council.

**Mr LISTER:** Have any of the appointments which are supposed to be done under the auspices of the appointment advisory panel been made without reference to it?

**Mrs D'ATH:** All of the appointments that the panel considers are in accordance with the protocol. The protocol does not include these positions and it is clear. It is not that I am going outside of the protocol. The drafting of the protocol was consulted on through the legal profession as to the scope of that protocol.

The reason that is important is that, in establishing the protocol for the first time, we called on and set up a register of those in the legal profession who wanted to put themselves forward for an expression of interest. They have not done this before. The way it was always done in the past is that an Attorney-General would have a private meeting individually with heads of the jurisdiction, the Bar Association and the Law Society and decide on who it should be, but the fact is that we do not know—and the attorneys-general at the time did not know—who else out there may be interested in being appointed and certainly be meritorious of appointment.

The protocol has allowed for the first time those who are particularly interested in being appointed to the District and Supreme courts to put their name forward, knowing that all of the discussions and all the consideration by the Attorney-General—and, ultimately, the decision sits with me as to who I appoint, in line with the protocol—are strictly confidential. They are confidential by me—all the conversations and consideration I have. The recommendations of the panel are strictly confidential and need to be, because the panel has to have confidence, because it is part of the legal profession, that its recommendations are not going to be judged externally. That is in no way a reflection on their peers as to whether they are put up for recommendation or not on a particular appointment. Because these people are meritorious, that does not mean there are not others.

All of my appointments—every single appointment I make—are in accordance with the protocol where they are positions under the protocol. All other positions that sit outside of that, because they are internal appointments from the court, are done in direct consultation, as every other attorney-general has done before my time, with the head of the jurisdiction—the Chief Justice, the Chief Judge and the Chief Magistrate.

I have an update on the last question from the member for Maiwar. With regard to the cost of drug prosecutions, the budget in 2018-19 for the Drug Court is \$3.188 million. I guess what we are saying is, 'Here is funding allocated to a court structure to deal with drug and alcohol,' so \$3.188 million. Funding to the DPP is \$52 million in total and funding to Legal Aid Queensland is \$159 million.

We know that drugs are a significant contributing factor to a range of criminal offences and we are certainly committed to funding their vital justice services to tackle that detriment. The information about drug charges that is recorded by courts and the DPP does not separately charge per drug. Charges are recorded on possession of a drug listed in schedule 1 or 2 of the Drugs Misuse Regulation. That is probably as far as we can break it down for the member in answering that question. I know that we are beyond the allocated time, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** Yes. The time allocated for consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolio of Justice and Attorney-General has expired. I understand that all questions taken on notice have been answered. I thank the Attorney and departmental officers for their attendance. Attorney-General, if there is anyone you wish to thank, you may take a moment to do so.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I think it is very important firstly to thank the chair and committee members and those committee members who sought leave to appear today as part of the estimates process. It is a very important process, and I certainly value the ability to come along and talk about the work that my department is doing and the government is doing within the JAG portfolio. I want to thank the department which helped with the preparation for estimates—I know there is a lot of work that goes into it—and staff across the Department of Justice and Attorney-General who deliver great service to Queensland each and every day.

**CHAIR:** Attorney, I understand that there may be one question on notice from the member for Noosa about Legal Aid funding for previous—

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Chair, I did not take that question on notice. I made a commitment to that member to separately follow up with her outside the committee process.

**CHAIR:** That is correct, Attorney. I apologise for that mistake. The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 1.30 with the examination of estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services.

**Proceedings suspended from 12.52 pm to 1.30 pm.**



## **ESTIMATES—LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE— POLICE AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES**

### **In Attendance**

Hon. MT Ryan, Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services

Ms E McIntyre, Chief of Staff

#### **Queensland Police Service**

Mr I Stewart, Commissioner

Mr S Gollschewski, Deputy Commissioner, Crime, Counter-Terrorism and Specialist Operations

Ms T Linford, Deputy Commissioner, Strategy, Policy and Performance

Mr R Gee, Deputy Commissioner, Regional Operations

Mr A MacCracken, Manager and Parliamentary Liaison Officer

#### **Queensland Corrective Services**

Mr P Martin APAM, Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner

Mr R Wood, Chief of Staff, Office of the Commissioner

Mr P Shaddock, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Statewide Operations

#### **Prostitution Licensing Authority**

Judge W Tutt, Chairperson



**CHAIR:** The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2018 for the portfolio area of the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services until 5.15 and will break from 3.30 until 3.45. I would like to welcome to the committee Mr Trevor Watts, the member for Toowoomba North. I would like to also introduce the rest of the members of the committee: Mr James Lister, the member for Southern Downs and our deputy chair; Mr Stephen Andrew, the member for Mirani; Mr Jim McDonald, the member for Lockyer; Mrs Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister; and Ms Corinne McMillan, the member for Mansfield, who will join us shortly. The committee has granted leave for non-committee members to ask questions at its hearing today so other members may be present over the course of the proceedings.

I remind those present this afternoon that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament also apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide the proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the minister, the Police Commissioner, departmental officers and members of the public to the hearing. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or Police Commissioner. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of Police open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes?

**Mr RYAN:** Thank you, Chair, and committee members. I firstly acknowledge members of the Queensland Police Service and officers of the Public Safety Business Agency who are here for this estimates hearing.

Right across the state, policing is being transformed. In a rapidly changing world, the Queensland Police Service is an early adopter of transformational technology and new models of policing. In simple

terms, this means a police service that responds more rapidly than ever before to crime and safety issues. It responds faster and in greater numbers. It is an agile police service that puts officers where they need to be when they need to be there. It is a service that does not recognise imaginary lines on a map. It is a borderless police force that surges in numbers whenever needed.

It is a police service that is connected and mobile, a police service that has a heightened presence in the community. Out on the streets, members of the community will see more police more often. It is a police service that looks forward not back, a police service that embraces what works in a new technological age and is not afraid to discard outdated models of policing.

In short, it is the police service that the people of Queensland deserve. It is the police service that Queenslanders need to feel safe. This new police service is evolving in many ways. Gone are the days of agencies existing in silos. It is an organisation that is embracing new technology, an organisation that is identifying new crime trends. It is an organisation that is adopting a new organisational model of policing. The old bricks-and-mortar model of counting how many police are assigned to a particular station or building is redundant. Now it is a fluid police service, with officers flowing in numbers to wherever they are needed. Now it is a mobile response to crime as it is happening, where it is happening. This is critical. An agile, mobile police service capable of rapid, targeted deployment is essential now and in the future, and it is a rapidly changing environment. In 2018 it is Facebook and Instagram. In 2028 who knows, but the Queensland Police Service will be on it.

Recent history is also instructive. Policing in 2018 is completely different than even 20 years ago. In 1998 we were still grasping the usefulness of email. Now we have officers equipped with body worn cameras and iPads with connectivity to important information, effectively transforming their patrol cars into police stations on wheels.

What else has changed? Under the Palaszczuk government, we now have more police across Queensland than ever before. We have more police facilities, more technology for our police to use, new police boats, more specialist officers, more support for at-risk youths. What does that all mean? It means a safer Queensland. Earlier today I saw the hard evidence of what I am talking about. Police showed the media the technology and the equipment that they are using to fight crime. QLITE tablet devices for connectivity, robots for defusing bombs—these are the kinds of devices that a modern police service utilises.

The Queensland Police Service is always looking to the future. It is now looking closely at other new and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and robotics. It is not just the gear; it is the people who make the biggest difference. Today we also saw the latest training our most specialist officers undergo. These are the officers whose job it is to fight terror. The Palaszczuk government is investing \$15.7 million in enhanced counterterrorism capabilities. That will include 85 new counterterrorism specialists embedded statewide. Just this month, a new dedicated counterterrorism police command began operation.

There is a lot happening. There is \$5.4 million for delivering new water police boats. The rollout of 1,400 new QLITE mobile tablet devices continues as I speak right now. This is a \$5.9 million investment over three years. When it comes to our government's commitment, we do not just talk, we act. We back our police to the hilt. We give them the resources they need. I take this opportunity to commend the Queensland Police Service and the agency that supports them, the Public Safety Business Agency, for their tireless efforts in keeping all Queenslanders safe.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister. I will hand over to the deputy chair.

**Mr LISTER:** I refer my questions to the member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr WATTS:** First, I just say thank you to all of the QPS officers for the hard work they do keeping Queensland safe. My first question is to you, Commissioner. Did the QPS budget submission ask for more money than has been appropriated?

**Commissioner Stewart:** Mr Watts, thank you for that question. I think every year I ask for more and that is the reality of it. There will never be enough money to do everything that I would love to do with our police service of the day. What I do know is that the minister through the proper processes of attribution looks at our claims, our submissions, and provides us with a budget which we then use in the best way possible to keep Queensland safe. Our budget this year of \$2.3 billion is an enormous sum. As you are well aware, most of that money is identified for fixed salary costs. This is where our people really do matter and the minister mentioned that earlier. Through the budget that is given to us, I think we get more than our bang for the buck. We get more police and more police stations. We are certainly getting more technology and more specialist police officers.

I could repeat many of the statements that the minister has already made today around what we are getting, but I think in this rapidly evolving world one of the things we are given are good people who are capable and who have the capacity to look to the future and for us to plan about the best way to use every dollar we are given. That is our role as an executive leadership team, and you have most of the executive leadership team in the room today.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you, Commissioner. I go to my second question. In terms of police officers per 100,000 Queenslanders, according to the annual statistical review, in 2016 there were 245 and in 2017 that dropped to 242. Commissioner, as at 30 June 2018, how many police officers were there per 100,000 Queenslanders?

**Commissioner Stewart:** Thank you for that question. I am more than happy to answer it, but what I will say is that I truly believe, as is the case in contemporary policing around the world now, the nexus between simple numbers of population and the number of police is becoming less important. It is becoming less important because of the impact that we have of force multipliers, like technology, the specialist support staff that we have and of course the leadership that we imbue with all of our people. I am sure that one of my colleagues is helping me as I speak to find that number.

**Mr WATTS:** Maybe we will come back to that number and I will move on to the next question.

**Commissioner Stewart:** I really do need to say that, when you look at law enforcement around the world and the impact of things like artificial intelligence and robotics, as the minister rightly mentioned earlier, the multiplier that that gives us is quite incredible, and I mention the changing nature of crime. When we talk about a population count in Australia or Queensland, for instance, and we start looking at police numbers that are tuned to that, we need to remember that a lot of the crimes against people who live in this state, against our community, are committed by people from all sorts of different areas.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you, Commissioner.

**Commissioner Stewart:** It is a very, very complex area.

**Mr WATTS:** My next question is again to you, Commissioner. Can you confirm that crime is up, with reports of all offences up in the second half of last year by three per cent and reports of rape and attempted rape up by nine per cent?

**Commissioner Stewart:** Again, thank you for that question. I can confirm for you in the last financial year that our figures, if taken on a year-by-year basis, show that offences against property are up by about four per cent. Sorry, this is the rate of offences. The rate of offences against persons is up by about four per cent. Other offences are down by about seven per cent. Overall, we have a drop in crime by about one per cent—that is a year on year—but the reality is that we have to take the long view. We have to look at crime over many years and the trend lines that occur in that space. To help give an example of that, particularly around general crime and sex offences, I am happy to invite my deputies to also speak to this. I might ask Deputy Commissioner Gee to comment.

**Deputy Commissioner Gee:** Thanks for the question. In terms of crime overall, as the commissioner said, offences against the person are up four per cent across the state. Against property they are up four per cent. Other offences, discretionary policing, are down seven per cent. Can I just say that the model we are using is aimed at minimising harm. The crime rates we see this year are not dissimilar to the crime rates we have seen in previous years. Overall trend rates over the last five to 10 years have shown that Queensland has done remarkably well.

I took a cursory glance this morning at New South Wales and Victoria and had a look at the rates of offences in those jurisdictions. I can inform the committee that, whilst around specific offences we need to be careful about analysis, overall generally Queensland is a very, very safe community to live, work and invest in. I think we have a particularly difficult demographic in the regions, and Queensland obviously is different to New South Wales and Victoria. Considering the harm that is possible given the number of vulnerable communities we have in this state—and I think the committee is well aware of the regions and what happens in many of those rural communities—the numbers tell us that Queensland is doing pretty well. Could I ask the member to repeat the last part of the question around sexual offences?

**Mr WATTS:** The question was: reports of rape and attempted rape are up by nine per cent.

**Deputy Commissioner Gee:** I can inform the committee that they are up on our numbers around that figure. I think we should take the specifics on notice, if that is okay.

**Mr WATTS:** I am happy for that to be taken on notice. Commissioner, comparing the first half of 2017 and the second half of 2017, armed robbery offences in Townsville increased by 126 per cent, with other significant increases in armed robbery in Far North, Logan and Mackay. Commissioner, of these robbery offences, how many were cleared within guidelines?

**Commissioner Stewart:** Certainly I will try to get that last stat for you as quickly as we can. Again, thank you for that question. Robbery, more generally, is one of the concerning crime classes we have at the moment. I certainly will not dispute the numbers that you have provided to me until I can look at perhaps our overall crime. Could I also mention that comparing unequal periods—and by that I mean you are certainly taking two six-month periods where you are comparing the stats against each other. The way we would normally compare the stats is to take the same six-month period from the previous year and compare it to this one. I am certainly happy to give you some insights into that.

I will say that it is an area that we are focusing on and we are looking for the causal factors of why we are seeing this trend. It is not just in Townsville; we know that. It is in other parts of the state. In general terms—and I would reiterate the impacting of issues, for instance the seasonal changes that occur, the fact that drugs and drug use have an impact on robbery offences—

**Mr WATTS:** We might come to some of that a bit later.

**Commissioner Stewart:** Absolutely. It does and we know that. It also is around people of disadvantage and the way that they are reacting to their circumstances. We know—

**Mr WATTS:** I might just ask the chair—I think there is a question from the member for Lockyer.

**Mr RYAN:** Point of order, Chair. The commissioner clearly had not finished his answer. The member for Toowoomba North, whether he is excited or rude, should allow the commissioner to answer the question.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister. Could I remind committee members to allow the person answering the question to complete the answer? Do not interrupt them. Allow them to finish, please. Commissioner, if you would like to continue?

**Commissioner Stewart:** Thank you, Chair. I appreciate that opportunity. These are important questions and I recognise that. What I need to say is on behalf of the people of Queensland. We are always looking for better ways of doing our business. Part of that is our focus on youth crime. As we know, a lot of these robbery offences are simple street robberies—mobile phones, certainly cash, handbags, those sorts of robberies that are occurring in the street. A lot of that is unarmed as well as armed. We get those two different types.

We are working heavily with all of the members of our communities and the leadership of the community to try to understand why particularly young people see that as being acceptable practice. Obviously there have to be consequences for these young people and we work very, very hard in tracking them down and dealing with it. Again, I think this is a really, really important issue. I would like the deputy from Regional Operations, Mr Gee, to also comment, if that is okay.

**Deputy Commissioner Gee:** In terms of rape and sexual offences, the best advice I can give the committee at the moment is that rape and attempted rape are up seven per cent this year. In terms of overall sex offences, though, it is only up one per cent—I should not say 'only'; they are up one per cent. In terms of robberies, 64 per cent of those are cleared. In terms of Townsville, I think we would have to take that question on notice, if that is okay. It is a very specific question across multiple districts.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. I understand that the member for Lockyer has a question.

**Mr McDONALD:** Commissioner and fellow former colleagues, it is an honour to be able to ask some questions here today. Weapons offences are very serious for our community. When was the weapons licensing system last audited and what were the results?

**Commissioner Stewart:** That is a very, very important issue. I would have to check specifically on the exact timing that you have spoken about. However, in relation to the weapons licensing system, we work very, very hard to look for continuous improvement in that area. It is certainly an important factor in the overall system of providing safe environments for legal weapons owners and registered weapons owners right around this country.

I do not know whether you are aware, but we manage the records of approximately 835,000 registered firearms and 195,000 weapons licence holders in Queensland. On average, that means each weapons licence holder has about four weapons. That is an average figure and we know that that varies widely. We receive approximately 300 new licence applications, 1,000 permit-to-acquire applications and 800 renewal applications every week to process. This is a huge task. In order to prevent the misuse

of weapons, each licence application has to be thoroughly addressed by a trained client services officer to ensure only fit and proper persons can hold a firearms licence, as outlined in the laws of this state.

QPS has undertaken a number of strategies, as I said, to improve weapons licence turnaround times. Currently, the majority of online new licence applications are processed within 12 weeks and online permit-to-acquire applications are processed within five days. Processing delays are primarily due to having to make follow-up inquiries and monitoring the activity required for incomplete and incorrect applications. We have also encountered processing delays when attempting to establish genuine reason in accordance with the weapons licensing act. This is a result of a general reason nominated that is not supported by the documentation provided by the applicant.

I think you know that one of the great benefits of the weapons licensing system provided by legislation in this state is that there are checks and balances. People who are aggrieved by the outcome of that process are able to go to QCAT and put forward a representation to have that reviewed. In one way, if you think about it, we are constantly having not just the systems audited but also the decisions that we make audited. I hope that that would be enough to provide an answer to your question to your satisfaction.

**CHAIR:** We have one more question before we move on.

**Mr ANDREW:** I would like to say thank you to the Queensland Police Service for the great things they do for Queensland in keeping us safe. I have a weapons licence question, too. It has been brought to my attention by some of the people I have spoken to in clubs that, in terms of the 42-day period after a licence expires, they have been forced into a kind of administrative breach because the licence has not been restored to that person after that 42 days. They have asked me what their exposure is legally when they are travelling to and from the range, to go shooting or whatever else, because they are in possession of the firearms, they do not have their actual card and it is outside of the 42 days. What is their exposure?

**Mr RYAN:** Point of order, Mr Chair, I want to know who that is directed to. Is it directed to the commissioner?

**Mr ANDREW:** To the commissioner, please.

**Commissioner Stewart:** Thank you. It is quite a complex question and I may have to seek some advice through the deputy commissioner responsible.

**CHAIR:** I am conscious that it may—

**Mr RYAN:** We are happy to answer the question. It is an important issue.

**Deputy Commissioner Gollschewski:** Technically, the law as it stands is that anyone outside the 42 days would be deemed to be unlawfully in possession, but we would need to get some further information—that is being worked on at the moment—to give a more fulsome explanation.

**Mr ANDREW:** It sort of refers back to what you were saying about the upgrade and having a look at it. I thought I would make it clear to you that it is happening so you can address it.

**Deputy Commissioner Gollschewski:** We are getting further information.

**Commissioner Stewart:** We should be able to have some of that information for you by the end of this session.

**Mr ANDREW:** Thank you.

**Mr RYAN:** While I have the opportunity, Chair, it is important to highlight the good work done by the Weapons Licensing Branch. I know that people are very keen to get their weapons licence renewed. I am informed by the Weapons Licensing Branch that courtesy packs are generally sent out before the expiry of a weapons licence. Of course, the date of the weapons licence is well known. From memory, it actually coincides with your birthday.

**Mr ANDREW:** That is correct.

**Mr RYAN:** Hopefully you do not forget your birthday. Of course, Weapons Licensing send those courtesy packs out to assist weapons holders not only with remembering to complete the application form but also with information around completing the application form. I will take this opportunity to acknowledge the good work of the Weapons Licensing Branch.

**CHAIR:** That leads me into my question. Fostering collaborative relationships with community groups to maximise opportunities, prevent crime and enhance communities is referred to on page 3 of the SDS. Illegal guns and weapons theft are significant issues in the community. Will the minister please

update the committee on initiatives being undertaken by the Queensland Police Service to tackle these important issues?

**Mr RYAN:** That is a very timely question and a good segue, Chair. It is quite clear that you cannot be tough on crime if you are soft on guns, and our government will never be soft on guns. We will stay true to the spirit of former prime minister John Howard's National Firearms Agreement. As a result of that agreement, Australia is a safer place and Queensland is a safer place. As a result of that, our government will never, ever weaken our gun laws here in this state.

Since the historic agreement put together by former prime minister Howard after the Port Arthur massacre, there have been no fatal mass shooting incidents in Australia, and we owe it to all Queenslanders and the rest of the nation to keep it that way. Of course, our police will continue to actively enforce our tough laws. Chair, you might be interested to know that recently a Queensland Police Service operation, Operation Quebec Camouflage, targeted illegal firearms in our community. This operation led to the seizure of more than 1,000 weapons here in Queensland.

It is important to also put Queensland's firearms situation in a proper context. Queensland has a strong legal firearms ownership culture that comprises, as we heard from the commissioner, in excess of 185,000 firearms licence holders with over 840,000 licensed firearms, and it continues to grow steadily each year. The legal firearms community comprises recreational shooters, sporting shooters, security industry personnel and land pastoralists, and the vast majority of licensed weapons holders are responsible, law-abiding citizens who properly secure their firearms. For that I thank them.

Illegal firearms are sourced through a variety of criminal activities including theft, illegal importation, home manufacturing, dark web sales and purchases, trafficking and the diversion of unregistered firearms. Reports of firearm theft in Queensland have decreased over the past two years: 581 firearms were reported stolen in 2017 compared to 777 in 2016, and in 2018 so far 344 firearms have been reported stolen as of June 2018. The 2017 national firearms amnesty resulted in some 16,000—I will say that again—16,000 firearms being surrendered in Queensland. We have also detected instances of 3D printing of firearms and firearm parts in Queensland. Just last week police on the Sunshine Coast arrested and charged a man who allegedly used 3D technology to manufacture a handgun.

The QPS will continue to monitor developments in this space to ensure our safety moving forward. Following reported transnational trends, illegal firearms in Queensland are subject to the broader influence of the national criminal domain with particular nexus to Australia's drug trade, where they are used as a strong trading commodity or as an enabler of criminal activity. Police continue to be vigilant against firearm offences. Operation Quebec Camouflage, as I mentioned earlier, was a statewide strategy in February this year to reduce the number of unlicensed firearms in Queensland. This operation included weapons audits, tactical enforcement and a media strategy to encourage unlicensed weapons holders to surrender firearms. The community responded to the strategy, with over 100 people contacting police to surrender 234 firearms. In one instance, the family of a large firearms collector who, due to illness was no longer fit to hold his collector's licence, contacted police to facilitate the surrender of over 85 firearms. In fact, one firearm was with an antique anti-aircraft machine gun, which obviously could have been very threatening in the wrong hands, Chair, as I am sure you understand.

Enforcement actions including search warrants, weapons storage audits, weapons licensing audits, recovering firearms in the possession of persons with expired licences, deceased estates, and actioning domestic violence court-ordered weapons licence suspensions and seizing firearms are all activities undertaken by our Queensland Police Service. In total, during the operation over 1,000 weapons were recovered by police. Community education, targeted education through industry and sporting shooters clubs, and enforcement and media campaigns highlighting the importance of firearm security are also building resilience against firearms theft. The Queensland government regularly meets with stakeholders of the firearms industry at the Firearms Advisory Forum. The QPS is also a member of Operational Athena, the national response targeting the illicit firearms trade in Australia, and members of our State Crime Command firearms and cannabis team represent the QPS in this national strategy. In fact, the firearms and cannabis team collaborates with state and federal law enforcement partners to detect and disrupt the illegal importation and distribution of illicit firearms into and within Queensland. This team investigates firearms trafficking and supports the regions with intelligence and investigative strategies for firearm theft offences.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Page 7 of the SDS refers to road safety. Would the minister please update the committee on recent campaigns and achievements by Road Policing Command?

**Mr RYAN:** Thank you for opportunity to talk about a critical part of the Queensland Police Service's work, which is encouraging safety on our roads and holding those people who are unsafe on our roads to account. The Palaszczuk government and the Queensland Police Service are committed to keeping Queenslanders safe, and one of the greatest challenges police face is keeping Queenslanders safe on the roads. Responsibility for this lies in part with the Road Policing Command of the Queensland Police Service.

The Road Policing Command uses a diverse range of strategies and campaigns to promote safe driving. The command has achieved much and will never back away from striving for better driver behaviour, but ultimately this is also a matter of individual responsibility. The core message is that the responsibility for road safety rests with everybody every day. Driving is something that many people do every day and something that is normally regarded as unremarkable. The reality is that driving a motor vehicle is a complex and demanding task which requires the complete engagement of the person behind the wheel. In even the smallest of cars the driver is piloting around about a tonne of metal through often congested and busy streets. Any distraction can result in traumatic consequences. The Road Policing Command is doing all it can to minimise that road trauma. The enforcement activities of the Road Policing Command in Queensland are highly visible and strategic in nature and are intended to improve road user behaviour.

The Queensland Police Service's total road enforcement statistics are worth noting. In 2017-18 over 2.6 million random breath tests were conducted with approximately 16,500 drink-driving offences detected; over 65,000 roadside saliva tests were undertaken with over 12,000 drivers testing positive for one or more relevant drugs; over 176,000 speeding infringement notices were issued; over 9,000 infringement notices were issued for not wearing a seat belt; and over 14,000 infringement notices were issued for using a mobile phone while driving. These are all things that can be avoided. They are all things that everyone who operates a vehicle is responsible for paying attention to. As a specialist unit of the Queensland Police Service, Road Policing Command serves its mission to regulate driver behaviour to stop crime, make the community safer and reduce road trauma and its consequences.

Road Policing Command officers contribute directly to road safety initiatives with pro-active and reactive strategies, both overt and covert, right across the state. The Road Policing Command, in the spirit of the Queensland Police Service's commitment to innovation, is also innovating by: the fitting of 51 mobile radars to police motorcycles; the continued use of the high-profile 'fatal five' specialist vehicles for operational duties and engagement; the use of automatic numberplate recognition cameras installed on 36 Road Policing Command vehicles right across the state; and—a new innovation—using eticketing for the issuing of electronic traffic infringements by SMS and email which, based on anecdotal feedback, has been welcomed by recipients of those etickets. You would not think that you would normally be formally happy to get a ticket, but I have been advised that people who receive etickets welcome the opportunity to receive that ticket electronically. Command operations specifically concentrate on high-visibility random drink and drug driver detection; vulnerable road users, including bicycles and pedestrians; heavy vehicles; motorcycles; hooning; black spot locations; and community and stakeholder engagement. These operations are conducted every day and night with an emphasis on school holidays and public holidays.

Another initiative is Operation Menzel, which is an operation that tasks officers to engage with local communities, stakeholders and even repeat offenders to ensure that the road safety message is delivered and the road safety mission achieved by community engagement balanced with law enforcement. The location of enforcement activities are determined by evidence based road crash data showing where there are black spots and a high incidence of injury crashes as well as from traffic complaints, alcohol and drug driver locations and intelligence. This evidence based approach enables the Queensland Police Service to identify effective police enforcement strategies.

As a partner agency, the Department of Transport and Main Roads conducts complementary education and enforcement activities with their public awareness and education campaigns and transport inspector operations. The Department of Transport and Main Roads' Join the Drive campaign—which is strongly supported by the Queensland Police Service—recognises that we all have a role to play in road safety and saving lives. There is one commitment that the Queensland Police Service can give in this respect, and that is that Road Policing Command operations will continue throughout the year, every year, everywhere and every day for the safety of everyone on our roads to reduce road trauma and road fatalities.

**Mrs McMAHON:** Page 3 of the SDS refers to providing world-leading equipment, technology and facilities to support front-line staff. Will the minister please provide advice on the progress on the initiative to deliver body worn cameras to the Queensland police and the benefits from the rollout?

**Mr RYAN:** This is an outstanding investment in our officers and an investment that has been recognised worldwide. Body worn cameras have delivered another layer of technological sophistication to modern policing. They deliver so many benefits to police, the community and the justice system. The LNP would not commit to buying these cameras when they were in government: they forced officers to buy their own body worn cameras. Our government does not stand for that. It was up to the Palaszczuk government to deliver the rollout of this valuable technology.

The introduction of body worn cameras has delivered the following benefits: reduction in officer time spent on paperwork, meaning an increase in time on patrol; improved collection of evidence; reduction in the use of force by officers; moderated behaviour of people present at incidents; improved officer conduct and professionalism; reduction in complaints against police; and a reduction in not guilty pleas. What do we take away from this? Those opposite like to talk tough on crime but they never deliver. The Palaszczuk government does not waste time talking: we act. We deliver. That is why we give police the resources they need to deliver a safer Queensland.

This government delivered the body worn camera program and all the benefits associated with it. To do this we allocated more than \$6 million over three years to provide body worn cameras to front-line police. The completion of the stage 2 Queensland Police Service rollout of the body worn camera program concluded in January 2018 and has resulted in the provision of more than 5,100 cameras and 850 docking stations to 168 police stations, 47 road policing units and 16 technical crime squads well ahead of the project end date. The introduction of body worn cameras has been positively accepted statewide. I am proud to say that this is the largest rollout of body worn cameras in Australia and the third-largest rollout in the world. The rollout of body worn cameras provides a significantly enhanced capability for the Queensland Police Service, and the new technology will deliver improved performance and services to the community. Front-line police, including general duties officers and specialist police such as Road Policing Command officers, tactical crime units and officers in rapid action and patrol groups, have all benefitted from the rollout of the body worn camera program. The body worn camera program rollout has resulted in significant benefits to the Police Service and the community more broadly, including an enhanced evidence-gathering capability, greater transparency in police interactions and improved service delivery.

The ability to record events electronically as they occur has a range of benefits specifically relating to the gathering of evidence. There is some interesting data here. From the body worn camera program the Queensland Police Service has now captured an enormous 392 terabytes of data comprising over 1.9 million files. Body worn cameras assist officers in managing operational situations and in court proceedings for serious incidents such as domestic violence and alcohol fuelled violence through the enhanced evidence gathering technologies and techniques they provide. This government is committed to supporting our front-line officers, and we are proud to say that since 2016 we have almost doubled the existing fleet of body worn cameras to over 5,100 devices.

**Mr LISTER:** I will defer to the member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you very much. Commissioner, I refer to the recently RTI-ed February QPS crime drivers report prepared by the Intelligence, Counter-Terrorism and Major Events Command. Do you endorse this report?

**Mr RYAN:** You did not have to RTI it. The data in it is publicly available, for starters. Commissioner?

**Commissioner Stewart:** I thank the member for this question. Perhaps if I can put it this way: as a contemporary policing agency, if we were not attempting to understand what is driving crime in this state then I think that you, as well as every other member of the parliament, would have the right to kick us very severely. Do I endorse every piece of that report? We have been working on looking at exactly this issue and analysing all of the factors which may be driving offenders or offending at all levels and across all classes of crime in this state. This has been going on for some time. The fact that we put it into a report is certainly something reasonably new. We use these documents internally. That is what they are designed for. The stats we use are generally available on our website and certainly available over time, as the minister quite properly said, but it is the interpretation of that.

Earlier today I had to answer a question about a particular crime class. It is very challenging when the people who are most affected by this have provided information to us about why they were potentially victimised and why they committed offences—so there are both sides of the equation. Our really challenging role is to try to make sense of how we ever got to this position and how those decisions were made. This is something that is almost the Holy Grail of contemporary law enforcement, and I know that many research think tanks around the world are working on exactly these sorts of



projects. Some will do it from the angle of sociological research, so they look at the human factors. Others will look at big data and they will invest very heavily in trying to analyse that data and get predictive analysis about potentially where crime might occur into the future.

There is some evidence about this, and we recently had a presentation from the London School of Economics. A particular professor was out here in Australia and said that they believed that with good data you may be able to predict about 80 per cent of crime. I was very encouraged by that comment, because this has been a journey for many years about trying to predict where and when crime will occur. However, that is a totally different question to this issue about what the causal factors are and—this comes back to the very nature of this hearing today about estimates and about where governments invest their dollars—I have truly come to the belief that an investment in health services and in education, particularly for young people, and support services for them is just as important if not necessarily more important than even the many dollars that we are lucky enough and privileged to have in policing in this state, because if we invest properly and we can address some of these causal factors in a proactive and positive way then the need for ever-increasing budgets in the policing portfolio might dissipate. That is the Holy Grail and it is not going to happen tomorrow, but I would hope that you would join the minister and support us in making sure that we are doing exactly what you have talked about in terms of that research because it is so fundamental to us being able to protect our community across all facets of crime.

**Mr WATTS:** Absolutely.

**Mr RYAN:** The point of the matter is to not go through things and cherry-pick data which is old or from periods that do not match other periods. The work that is being done by the Queensland Police Service in this space is, as the Police Commissioner describes, the Holy Grail. Policing agencies right across the world are working on this. What they want to do is understand that critical question of why crime happens. The police can answer the questions about what, when, how and where, but no policing agency around the world has yet nailed why crime happens. The Police Service should be commended for doing this work, not attacked and not with cherry-picked statistics either.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you, Minister. Certainly there is no intent here to attack you or your service, Commissioner.

**Commissioner Stewart:** Thank you.

**Mr WATTS:** I absolutely support the Police Service.

**CHAIR:** Before you go on, member for Toowoomba North, I want to welcome to the committee Mr Michael Berkman MP, member for Maiwar.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, I take you to page 11 of the report. There is a section there relating to robbery offences.

**Mr RYAN:** I raise a point of order—I can guess the report which the member is referring to—on two bases. One, can he table a copy of the report so we can compare apples with apples. Two, this is a budget estimates proceeding, so can we have a connection to the question before the committee?

**Mr WATTS:** Certainly.

**CHAIR:** Before you go on, do you have a copy for each member of the committee?

**Mr WATTS:** I have the page or the entire report, whichever you would like, Chair.

**CHAIR:** I would prefer a page.

**Mr WATTS:** There we go. Here are 10 copies of the page for you.

**CHAIR:** I ask that the minister and the commissioner be provided with a copy, please. Can the member please advise the committee whether or not this document contravenes any of the standing orders?

**Mr WATTS:** I do not believe it does. The connection to the budget is quite simple and was in fact described by the minister—

**CHAIR:** Sorry to interrupt again, but down the bottom of the document it has just been pointed out to me that it has the word 'protected'.

**Mr WATTS:** This is now a public RTI document.

**CHAIR:** Okay. Is leave granted to table the document? Leave is granted.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you. Its connection back to the budget is simple. The focus of the police budget is to provide the resources to try and reduce crime. This talks about the drivers of crime and

therefore is critically important to that. Commissioner, I take you to the page you now have—page 11 of the report—and the section titled ‘Robbery’. According to this report, the first identified driver of robbery offences is juveniles. Commissioner, of more than 2,000 robbery offences committed in the past 12 months, how many are suspected or cleared as having been committed by juvenile offenders?

**Commissioner Stewart:** Thank you for your question. I have just been quickly refreshing myself of the content. Whilst juvenile offending has been noted as a significant issue in relation to robbery offences, that was in the context of the work that was done for this particular report. It is not the only one, as I think I mentioned earlier. Social disadvantage and drug use are also part of that. I do not have the specific statistics, I think, that you just asked me for around that, but we know that the use of social media that allows juvenile offenders to connect very rapidly to help them commit offences more broadly than just robbery is certainly one of those. I do have some information before me that would tell me that in the 2017-18 years approximately 17 per cent of all offenders were juveniles and that is a two per cent increase in the proportion of juvenile offenders in 2016-17.

**Mr WATTS:** Just for clarity, is that robbery offences or all offences?

**Commissioner Stewart:** No, that is all offenders, so we are taking a general look across-the-board. What I do know is that another part of that, particularly around juvenile offenders, is that female offenders are becoming increasingly prominent in committing offences. I would ask my colleague Deputy Commissioner Linford whether she can add any clarity to the question you specifically asked.

**Deputy Commissioner Linford:** Thank you. I do not have any specific statistics around robbery, but I refer to the last comment made by the commissioner with regard to one of the things that we are looking through with the crime drivers report. I used to be the assistant commissioner in charge of the intelligence area that started that report, so maybe I can elaborate a little more on where we are going with that approach.

In terms of the comment the commissioner just made around female offenders, that is a phenomenon that is being seen in other parts of Australia as well, so it is something that we are trying to understand as to why suddenly we are seeing a very big increase in female juvenile offenders. In terms of going back to the actual crime drivers report and how that has come about, if I can elaborate further, we have used the organised crime funding money that was given to the QPS in 2016 and over a four-year period we are bringing on 80-plus specialist intelligence resources that we are embedding right throughout all districts in the Queensland Police Service. The idea of those specialist—

**Mr LISTER:** Mr Chair, I raise a point of order under standing order 118 regarding relevance. The question was about juveniles, not women.

**Deputy Commissioner Linford:** I am not talking about women now. What I am talking about now is embedding of the—

**CHAIR:** Excuse me, but there is no point of order. Please continue.

**Deputy Commissioner Linford:** Thank you. The embedding of this specialist intelligence staff throughout all districts in the Queensland police is about creating a push-pull mechanism where from the central intelligence command we can put out questions to look for crime trends that are happening in the various districts. Likewise, we are training up those specialist analysts to go out and talk to offenders and talk to the investigators and ask them why they are committing the crime types that they are. Hopefully in time, as they develop that capability—and I would be hopeful that that will occur within the next year or two—we will have a much better understanding about what is actually causing crime. This is an initiative that has not yet taken off in some of the other states, so we are one of the first states to go and embed a significant number of additional intelligence resources out in the field to try to answer these questions for us.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, referring to the same report, I have some other pages—page 13 or page 12, depending on if you go from the report’s page number—

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba North, are you seeking leave to table it?

**Mr WATTS:** Yes please, if I may.

**CHAIR:** We will wait until everyone gets a copy, please. I ask for a copy to be provided to the commissioner and the minister. I am just making sure you have a copy.

**Mr RYAN:** We do not have it yet.

**CHAIR:** I should also indicate that this will be the last question in this block. Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, I refer to the document before you which states at page 13—

A further conclusion of the assessment was that of the juveniles being increasingly identified as committing offences on bail this often means that offenders have more opportunities to commit offences and are not concerned with the additional offence of breach of bail.

Commissioner, of juvenile offenders in the state, how many were charged with an offence while they were on bail in the past 12 months?

**Commissioner Stewart:** Again, I would need to take that on notice so that I can get some accurate figures for you around that. A couple of issues are also really important when we talk about juvenile offenders. We know from research that we are arresting fewer juveniles but we are charging them with more offences. In other words, we know that recidivism is a major crime driver in this case, particularly for juvenile offenders. I may even be able to get you the statistics that back up that statement, but this is why, particularly around offences such as robbery, break and enter, we certainly know that many of these offences are committed as opportunity offences. They are simply kids out and about with very little to do other than to find their own enjoyment. Sadly, that enjoyment usually means a criminal offence. That is how they get their excitement.

That is where creating teams that will look at specifically those types of underpinning causal factors are so necessary. In this state—and the minister, I am sure, will comment on this—we have an award-winning program called Booyah, which the government has funded for us and for which we are very grateful. It is a partnership program that runs in many places in the state. It is really successful in providing options for young people at risk and potentially young people who fall into that category of early offenders. It is about helping those young ones understand that the consequences of their actions can have very long-term and far-reaching effects rather than what they look at most of the time, which is, 'What am I doing for the next hour?' This is this issue of the quote that you just read. It is why we are concerned that we need to find alternative outlets for their enthusiasm, their passions and their enjoyment that they have with their friends. Minister, did you want to comment about Booyah, because I think that it is a really—

**Mr LISTER:** Point of order. The question was to the commissioner.

**Mr RYAN:** But as the responsible minister I have the—

**Mr LISTER:** The standing orders say that the minister may not answer the question for the commissioner.

**Mr RYAN:** No, but the commissioner can refer. That is quite proper.

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order. I invite the minister to continue.

**Mr RYAN:** Thank you, chair. I am happy to go through the standing orders with the member later on. The member might want to cherrypick data and also cherrypick phrases from the crime drivers draft report. It is a draft report that the Queensland Police Service has informed me needs a lot more work. It needs a lot more work, because it needs to drill down into that question of why there is crime. I think the member, with his cherrypicking of that quote, has given his own slant on that particular statement. It says that these offenders commit more offences and are not concerned with the additional offence of breach of bail. Irrespective of whether that offence exists or not, they are committing those offences.

That asks a bigger question about how we provide a more comprehensive, holistic program to intervene early with young people to ensure that we divert them from crime. One of those strategies is a very good program that is run by the Queensland Police Service, Project Booyah—one that this government has a significant investment in and significant pride in because it works. The statistics are through the roof. If the member wants to look at some statistics, he should look at the statistics for Project Booyah. There is an 83 per cent success rate.

I will tell the member another statistic. Notwithstanding the federal government previously providing support for Project Booyah, there is the statistic of zero support for the federal government now for Project Booyah. I have written to the federal minister twice and he has not even given me the decency of a response. I have heard silence from the LNP about this award-winning program—this program that in the past LNP members have been happy to crow about in their newsletters, yet when the federal government refuses to extend funding to employ youth workers in certain locations right across the state to deliver on the success of Project Booyah to divert young people away from crime, make a safer community, the LNP is out to pasture. I have not heard a single thing about the LNP in Queensland standing up to their mates in Canberra about this really important project. It is disgraceful and it shows that they are not serious about a safer community.

**CHAIR:** I direct you to page 3 of the SDS. One of the strategies being used by the Queensland Police Service relates to working in strong collaborative partnerships with the community and other law enforcement agencies. Will the minister advise the committee on initiatives being implemented by the Queensland Police Service to target the drug ice?

**Mr RYAN:** As many members of our community agree, drugs are a blight on our society and ice in particular is a devastatingly wicked example of one of the most dangerous substances out there wreaking havoc especially on our young people. Our government is fighting back hard. We are targeting the bikie gangs and others who peddle misery for profit. We are also recognising that successfully tackling the problems associated with drug abuse requires more than just a law and order response, or even just a health response; it requires all of us acting together. That can only be achieved through the efforts of all levels of government, industry, communities, families and individuals themselves. This coordinated approach and collaboration leads to improved outcomes, innovative responses and the better use of resources.

The Queensland Police Service is committed to strengthening relationships with the community and has engaged in a number of summits held across the state by the Queensland government in regional communities to develop solutions with communities that are affected by ice. Summits have been held in places such as Rockhampton and Caboolture. As well, there has been a round table in Townsville. On 10 February this year, following those summits and community feedback, the Queensland government announced Action on Ice, the Queensland government's plan. This plan supports the National Ice Action Strategy. The Action on Ice plan aims to reduce the supply and demand for ice and the harms and the effects of ice use.

As a part of the Action on Ice plan, the QPS will continue to enforce the criminal drug laws in Queensland and undertake activities targeting criminal syndicates involved in the supply, trafficking and production of dangerous drugs, including ice. It will prioritise organised crime investigations into high-threat criminal networks to disrupt and dismantle these networks that are creating the greatest harm to communities by trafficking in ice. It will continue to monitor the sale of precursor chemicals and equipment that can potentially be diverted to make ice in clandestine drug laboratories within Queensland and participate in the development of a national end-user declaration scheme. It will also continue to work with state, territory and Commonwealth partner law enforcement agencies throughout Australia to address and disrupt the significant involvement of organised criminal syndicates in the supply, trafficking and production of dangerous drugs, including ice. It will continue to work with communities to encourage the reporting of organised criminal activity related to the supply, trafficking and production of illicit drugs.

It will also expand roadside drug testing to perform up to 75,000 tests per year within the next four years. We are well on the way to achieving that target. It will ensure that appropriate support and resources are available to assist young people to deal with issues associated with their own or a family member's or a friend's alcohol and other drug use through initiatives such as school based police officers and Adopt a Cop. It will continue to divert minor or moderate illicit drug offenders from the criminal justice system for assessment, education and treatment through drug diversion programs.

The National Drug Strategy forms the overarching framework for addressing alcohol and drug related harms, including ice, in the community. The Queensland Police Service is a member of the national law enforcement methamphetamine strategy, which comprises Australian police jurisdictions and other law enforcement agencies and is charged with focusing developing coordinated strategies to combat methamphetamine, including ice.

In support of the strategy, the Queensland Police Service Drug and Serious Crime Group, in partnership with the Australian Border Force, Australia Post and regional police, continue to target the distribution of dangerous drugs, including ice, through the domestic mail stream into Queensland. The State Crime Command, Major and Organised Crime Squad (Rural) team is in partnership with Queensland Rugby League Outback under the program to engage outback Rugby League clubs and communities right across Queensland. This is about building awareness of illicit drug use in those regional communities.

The Queensland Police Service Drug and Serious Crime Group is a specialist investigative unit attached to the State Crime Command, whose purpose is to provide focused, high-level, proactive investigative expertise targeting serious and organised crime that has significant statewide multijurisdictional or national implications. The Drug and Alcohol Coordination Unit has developed and delivered resources that include an ice community awareness package for police to deliver to community groups, an ice mobile device app and video learning product for police and an illicit drugs

mobile device app for police, associated fact sheets and other information distributed internally to Queensland Police Service members throughout the state.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the hard work that the Queensland Police Service does and the hard work that the Queensland Police Service continues to do with the Queensland community to encourage the reporting of organised criminal activity in relation to the supply, trafficking and production of dangerous drugs, including ice. As well as focusing on supply reduction strategies, the Queensland Police Service continues to support and engage stakeholders to facilitate demand and harm reduction initiatives driven by government policy and the private sector.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Page 93 of Budget Paper No. 3 shows that the government has provided a capital budget of \$1.23 million in 2018-19 to enable the Public Safety Business Agency to provide facilities, buildings, land, minor works, vehicles, vessels, information and communication systems and equipment for use by the Queensland Police Service. Will the minister advise the committee what will be delivered, including how capital works are prioritised?

**Mr RYAN:** I thank the member. The short answer is more—more will be delivered: more new boats, more new cars, more new tasers, more new QLITE tablet devices, more new police facilities, and more counterterrorism facilities and resources. However, the longer answer goes like this: the government is committed to keeping the people of Queensland safe and providing our front-line police with the equipment and infrastructure they need to do their job.

In 2018-19, the Queensland Police Service budget for capital works is \$1.23.3 million in capital funding to the Public Safety Business Agency. This will deliver facilities, ICT and other essential equipment to support the delivery of front-line policing services to Queensland communities. The PSBA's administered funding is used to build and support the ongoing operational capability of the QPS. Priorities are identified by QPS regions and evaluated for inclusion as initiatives in statewide programs of work.

Some of the key deliverables for 2018-19 will be the continued investment in our counterterrorism and community training centre at Wacol. In addition, there will be new warehousing facilities at Wacol and the refurbishment of office buildings at Wacol to support policing operations. We will also see funding to complete the replacement police station and district headquarters at Caboolture; an investment to upgrade the West End police station; funding to construct a new facility at Arundel; funding to complete the replacement station at Kilcoy; funding to complete the replacement station at Howard; funding to continue the planning and design of replacement stations or alternative facilities at Beaudesert, Caboolture, Coolum, Mount Morgan, Nambour and Pormpuraaw and also a new station at Highfields and the upgrade of stations at Aurukun and Atherton; funding to upgrade the Logan Village Neighbourhood Police Beat; funding for new and replacement Police Service vehicles; funding for new and replacement Police Service vessels; more funding for operational information and communication systems and equipment, including the public safety network; and funding for minor capital works across the state.

As I said in the opening to my response to your question, we are delivering more this year—new facilities, new vehicles, new equipment for our police—and we are doing that because we want to keep the people of Queensland safe and we want to ensure that our police are supported with the resources and infrastructure they need.

**CHAIR:** Could I ask the member for Macalister to ask the next question.

**Mrs McMAHON:** Page 3 of the SDS refers to equipping workforces for the future. Will the minister please provide the committee with an overview of policing successes related to ensuring a safe and secure Commonwealth Games and legacy equipment procured for the games that can continue to be used by the Queensland Police Service to keep Queensland safe?

**Mr RYAN:** Thank you very much, member. It was only this year but the Commonwealth Games seems so far away. What a great success the Commonwealth Games was and what a great contribution the Queensland Police Service made to the games to make it a successful and safe event. As all of us know, the Commonwealth Games was the biggest event ever held in Queensland and that meant also it was the biggest ever security contingent being deployed to an event to keep Queenslanders, athletes and visitors safe. I want to make sure, unlike recent discussion about the award of proper medals in the public conversation, that the Queensland Police Service gets a gold medal for its efforts in making the Commonwealth Games a safe and successful event.

This event was a massive logistical exercise from a security point of view. The Queensland Police Service worked closely with the Office of the Commonwealth Games, the Gold Coast 2018

Commonwealth Games Corporation and Australian government security agencies to ensure the safe and secure celebration of the Commonwealth Games. The games security operation consisted of a security force of over 9,500 personnel comprising over 3,700 Queensland Police Service officers as part of our dedicated operation, Operation Sentinel; over 4,200 contract security personnel; over 1,400 members of the Australian Defence Force; almost 100 officers from the Australian Federal Police; and a number of officers from national intelligence agencies. The games security workforce worked together to ensure a safe celebration of the Commonwealth Games. The Queensland Police Service officers from around the state were deployed to the games across all venues—the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns—with, of course, the strongest focus being on the Gold Coast. Based on learnings from previous events, including the Glasgow Commonwealth Games and the G20 Summit, a range of new initiatives were introduced as part of Operation Sentinel.

The Police Powers and Responsibilities (Commonwealth Games) Amendment Regulation 2017 prescribed protective security zones at the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville to facilitate security arrangements for the period of the games. This new legislation enabled police to quickly and efficiently search people, vehicles and places as needed in protective security zones. The Queensland police comparative risk assessment methodology and the counterterrorism security coordinator role provided a consistent methodology to assess the vulnerability of games venues and inform the assignment of security mitigations. Sentinel Unite was a three-part strategy encompassing a behavioural observation capability in the form of the Behaviour Observation and Suspicious Activity Recognition, a great legacy item—training our officers in that particular technique will provide for a safer Queensland for many years to come; Project Unite, a community safety awareness project aimed at increasing community vigilance and encouraging all Queenslanders to report suspicious activity; and a unified response aimed at providing businesses with key security information.

In partnership with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, a background-checking solution to identify concerning criminal or intelligence concerns was developed to enable the timely completion of background checks on games family members and the workforce as part of the games accreditation process. Engagement with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission significantly enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of the process without adversely impacting upon interstate law enforcement jurisdictions to deliver the service. The system went live on 31 July 2017 and by the conclusion of the games on 15 April 2018 approximately 68,000 checks had been conducted with more than 80,000 people monitored over the period of the games—extraordinary numbers.

Given the size and complexity of the games deployment, extensive work was undertaken to develop a workforce planning model to meet games requirements while balancing the capability of regions and commands to maintain business-as-usual services right across the state. Who can forget that we had two cyclones in the lead-up as well, yet the Queensland Police Service was able to not only maintain business as usual right across the state and respond to two cyclones but also secure a safe and secure games—outstanding work.

Contemporary accommodation, transport, logistics, rostering and ICT solutions resulted in members being well equipped to meet the challenges of an extended deployment away from their home station and usual support networks. These measures were very well received by members on the whole. A significant joint agency exercise program to test command control and coordination activities and interoperability of all internal and external stakeholders was conducted from mid-2017 through until the commencement of the games. This included the successful conduct of three deployment exercises on the Gold Coast. Extensive engagement was undertaken both in the lead-up to and during the games with groups wishing to use the games as a platform to draw attention to their causes. Throughout negotiations with these groups the Queensland Police Service respected the rights of those people to protest lawfully and peacefully in Queensland and worked to minimise potential disruptions while not tolerating disruptive behaviour to the games and associated events.

The Queensland Police Service also ensured the safe carriage of the Queen's baton on its epic 388-day journey through all nations and territories of the Commonwealth, from its commencement at Buckingham Palace in March 2017 and culminating in the opening ceremony on 4 April 2018.

In addition to all of these new skills, processes, techniques and experiences that the Queensland Police Service has developed as a result of the games, a lasting legacy of the games is infrastructure in the form of the Joint Emergency Services Coordination Centre. The Joint Emergency Services Coordination Centre was activated from 5 March to 18 April in support of the games and, post games, will now be the central coordination point for emergency services responsible for major events and incidents on the Gold Coast for many years to come.

Operation Sentinel, just like the 2018 Commonwealth Games, was a resounding success—an example of the professionalism of the Queensland Police Service and the ability of its officers to work collaboratively with their colleagues in state and Commonwealth agencies to ensure the safety of major events now and well into the future.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Thank you for being here. We are all too familiar with the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people incarcerated or in detention or engaged in diversion programs, all of which is well after initial engagement with the QPS. I think this is a question for the Commissioner. I am curious to know what data the QPS collects in relation to the rates of incidental or day-to-day engagement of police with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**Commissioner Stewart:** Thank you, sir, for that question. Could I clarify that you are asking what the service does in terms of trying to keep track of our engagements with not just people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or identity but more generally the cultural background or ethnic background of all of the engagements we have?

**Mr BERKMAN:** My apologies if my question is unclear. I suppose I am trying to understand how the QPS goes about identifying any disproportionate engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in day-to-day operations on the street as opposed to further down the line in the justice system.

**Commissioner Stewart:** Thank you. I certainly understand the relevance of your question, because it goes to the heart of where resources are put within the organisation, how we deploy our people and what the skill base is that they might need to do it. Perhaps if I could answer in this way in the first instance: certainly the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system is of huge concern. The minister may wish to also comment, of course, but for the last few years we have been trying to come to grips with the number of engagements we have more generally with the community. For a number of years we have used a figure of around six million engagements a year, but we know from our own data that, year on year—and I do not want to misrepresent this—for a number of years now, we have seen just under a 10 per cent growth in the service demand for our organisation. Our CAD data in particular is used in this way. We know that we are being asked to do 10 per cent more each year.

What is interesting about that is about 60 per cent of those jobs really are not police jobs in the end; they are jobs we may refer to another agency. They may be simply a welfare job. The other 40 per cent really do come within our purview. What we then do is act within the law to try to ascertain who it is we are engaging with. I say 'within the law' because often, particularly with a victim or a witness, we can simply ask that person what their ethnic background is but they are not obliged to answer that question. It is about making sure that we do not impinge people's privacy around that, but certainly ethnicity is a very, very important point to us because we know that we have one of the most multicultural countries and states anywhere in the world in terms of the number of different communities within our community that we are dealing with.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is a very, very important one and certainly we know that our engagement in many of our isolated communities is 100 per cent engagement—every engagement is one with persons of that background. I hope I am getting to the nub of your question because it is a very, very important issue for us to understand more precisely the community that we serve because, as you well know, for hundreds of years policing has been about members of the community policing their community. One of the tenets of Peel, the father of modern policing, is that the police are the community and the community are the police. What we have tried to do, and we have worked hard to do, is to implement a number of programs—again, I certainly invite the minister to comment on this—around specifically trying to target different ethnic groups either to become police or to become members of our organisation, not only to better mirror the society that we are serving but also to provide greater confidence to those different groups within our community. There are a whole range of other things. Perhaps if I could ask the minister to perhaps comment on the CALD program and other things.

**Mr RYAN:** Thank you, Commissioner. I guess part of the nub of the question as well is that it is very difficult to give data about engagements which are just a community engagement—a proactive policing type engagement, about building strong relationships. I know that every day police right across the state are engaging in those positive interactions, which are not necessarily law enforcement engagements; they are community capacity building engagements. The member might be aware that I am the ministerial champion for Kowanyama. Often when I travel to Kowanyama the commissioner comes with me. The interaction there between police and the community is humbling.

**Commissioner Stewart:** It is outstanding.

**Mr RYAN:** It is outstanding. They are as much a community member as they are an employee of the government. We are also engaged in implementing a lot of the learnings of the past. There is no doubt that the history of engagement with Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders has been dark. There is no doubt about that. There have been many reports. There have been many learnings over time. The Queensland Police Service is doing some pretty good, proactive work in taking on those learnings and developing not only a modern police service which is responsive to community safety concerns but also a modern police service which is about building strong communities.

You might not be aware that there is a specific Indigenous recruit preparation program in the Queensland Police Service. The Queensland Police Service is also a leader when it comes to NAIDOC Week celebrations. It was only a few weeks ago that that was recognised with the flag raising and the commissioner's annual breakfast. Also we employ police liaison officers. We employ Torres Strait Islander police liaison officers. We employ community police officers. We have specific training for all recruits coming through the Queensland Police Service in those multicultural awareness issues. The commissioner might like to get a bit more information from Deputy Commissioner Bob Gee, to round out the work that we are doing in this space.

**Deputy Commissioner Gee:** I will be very quick. I think we have about 170 support officers out there. Importantly for me, in 2016-17 in the state, 15 per cent of victims were Indigenous. That is a space for engagement that is remarkably sad, but it is something that we do. Any use of powers are recorded in accordance with the legislation. I make the point that community policing boards in each district across the state largely have representatives from broad sectors, but we are always looking for Indigenous input there. The elders in those various districts have been very good in that respect. I do not know that we need to go any further on the CALD program, but I would add that in Townsville, at the last swearing-in that I had the privilege of doing, there were 37 recruits and eight identified as Aboriginal or Indigenous. That was a great thing and we look forward to more of that.

**CHAIR:** Member for Southern Downs, do you have a question?

**Mr LISTER:** I defer to the member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr WATTS:** Minister, according to the open data website, in Queensland last year there were 40 rapes and attempted rapes each and every week. That is a shocking number. With regard to rape and attempted rape offences specifically, what is your government doing to support the police in keeping our community safe?

**Mr RYAN:** The member has asked about crime data. Of course, that crime data is available on the Queensland Police Service website for everyone to see. There is a word of caution always that you do look at the crime data in context. I think the commissioner spoke about the importance of doing that before.

One of the important things that police tell me about sexual offending in Queensland—any level of offending is unacceptable, but particularly heinous crimes such as sexual offending, which are terrible atrocious crimes—is that there are some emerging trends around greater awareness and greater confidence in police. The greater awareness comes from a few things. There are the domestic violence campaigns and support for victims of domestic violence, particularly out of the *Not now, not ever* report. I will come back to the supports that are associated with that program and the supports for victims of domestic violence in a moment. The royal commission into child abuse has provided some greater awareness about these particular crimes. There is also the #metoo campaign.

Police have told me that as a result of a number of these campaigns, as well as the Queensland Police Service being one of the leaders when it comes to public confidence in the police so that people who come forward know they will be supported by police, the rate of reported crime is going up. That does not necessarily mean that crime has gone up, but the rate of reported crime has gone up. Whether that is the underlying cause for the data that you refer to or there are some other things, nonetheless sexually based crimes are an atrocious thing. That is why it is important that we look at supports for victims of crime and we look at providing greater awareness about respect for others, which is the underpinning theme of the *Not now, not ever* report. I do not have to go through all of the outcomes and supports associated with that report, because everyone here is united in supporting that report and the things that are associated with it as a result of accepting all of those recommendations.

Commissioner, you might have some further things to say about the work that the Queensland police are doing to support victims of crime and those who are experiencing sexual offences.



**Commissioner Stewart:** Again, I will go back one step and talk a little about the rate of reported offences in Queensland, around sexual offences in particular, which include rape, attempted rape and other sexual offences. If you take the long game, any one crime is terrible—we know that—particularly with these types of offences. We know the violation that victims feel, both men and women, who are subjected to these crimes. In the 2008-09 statistical year, the overall rate of reported sexual offences in Queensland was 129 per 100,000. For the 2017-18 statistical year it was actually 126, so we have seen a slight drop in reported sexual offences. I acknowledge that for rape and attempted rape, if you take those two same periods, in 2008-09 it was 34 per 100,000 and in 2017-18 it was 42 per 100,000, so there was an increase. I would strongly argue that a range of factors have impacted on that.

I revert back to an earlier answer where I believe I said that we know that historically the rate of nonreporting is around 60 per cent. That comes from the counselling services that are out there; only four out of 10 victims will come forward to police. I do not know what the latest figures are on that, but certainly that has been historical for a number of years.

The sorts of things that we are doing, and the minister touched on it, include a greater focus on domestic and family violence and the propensity for those types of sexual offences to occur within that context; the way that we now refer people automatically to support agencies; the work that is done around child safety and sex offenders who prey on young children; that the education of police around this issue has grown over the years; and of course we have our Child Protection and Investigation Unit, the CPIU, which is specifically designed to assist the investigation where children are involved in these insidious offences. We have many partnerships. We promote, right across government agencies and outside-government agencies, the great work of the many support agencies. In particular, there is the work that we do in ATSI communities and the support that we try to provide in those communities for people who are subject to these type of offences.

Interestingly, the data would tell us that many of these offences are, in general, committed in private places; in homes or in hotel rooms, but certainly in private places. In general, the offender and the victim are known to each other, which is a sad reflection on our society in some regards. I know this is a bit of a stretch, but we are also committed to making sure that the representation of our workforce matches our society. I mentioned that before. It is one of the reasons why we have committed to that goal of 50:50 recruitment, so that we get a better gender balance within the organisation and make victims, particularly female victims, much more confident to come forward.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you, Commissioner.

**CHAIR:** This will be the last question in this block.

**Mr LISTER:** Commissioner, when did you first recommend to the police minister that the Mongrel Mob should be declared an identified organisation?

**Commissioner Stewart:** I will have to take that on notice, because obviously a significant amount of work goes into this. The process is that we develop basically a service submission on this particular group. We then provide it over time ultimately to the Attorney-General, with the support of our minister. The specific date I cannot give you right at this moment, but we can certainly try to find out for you.

**Mr WATTS:** Can I confirm with the chair that that question will be taken on notice, please?

**CHAIR:** The minister has said it is taken on notice.

**Mr RYAN:** We are happy to. It is on notice.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** I refer the minister to page 4 of the SDS, where it refers to a new security and counterterrorism command being established as part of the Queensland Police Service. Will the minister please update the committee on the new command and expected benefits for community safety?

**Mr RYAN:** There was a demonstration of the capability of members of our command out in front of parliament just before. It was a strong show of support. When you want to talk about tough on crime, they are really tough.

When it comes to law and order, the Palaszczuk government is leading the way. The government does not just talk tough: we act tough; we are tough. Actions speak louder than words. This government is providing the Queensland Police Service with the resources and personnel to meet the crime and public safety challenges of the modern world. What we see now is a police service with cutting-edge technology that underpins a new policing model that focusses on a borderless rapid-response capability

that sees police surge in numbers to wherever they are needed, whenever they are needed. It is also a model that recognises the need to be ever vigilant to emerging threats, for example, terrorism.

In 2017, the Queensland government committed over \$58 million over four years and \$1.3 million in capital for the establishment of a new security and counterterrorism command and 85 additional counterterrorism personnel right across the state. The new command was officially stood up this month. The security and counterterrorism command is led by an assistant commissioner, with three groups of counterterrorism specialists focussing on all aspects of counterterrorism from prevention to response. The three groups are the counterterrorism investigation group, the prevention and protection group, and the strategy and capability development group. The new command includes the security and counterterrorism network, which consists of counterterrorism professionals embedded across all police regions statewide. Tactical capability in response to counterterrorism incidents is also being enhanced.

Of course, the benefits will be the safety of the Queensland community. Those benefits include improving the Queensland Police Service's capability in preventing, preparing for and responding to a terrorist incident; reorientating the Queensland Police Service towards counterterrorism as core policing, rather than as the responsibility of a specialist area, by enhancing frontline knowledge and skills, tactical capability and capacity; improving interoperability with Commonwealth and state counterterrorism partners, as well as emergency service partner agencies; and mitigating the risk of terrorism where possible through organisational structures with appropriate spans of control. When you want to see the investment of this government in the safety of the people of Queensland, all you have to do is look at this new investment, new facilities and new officers to keep Queensland safe.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Page 4 of the SDS refers to providing world-leading equipment, technology and facilities to support our frontline staff. Will the minister update the committee on any significant recent operations involving police helicopters?

**Mr RYAN:** Queenslanders have someone to watch over them. It comes in the form of Polair 1 and Polair 2. Those are our helicopters associated with the Queensland Police Service. Last year they responded to over 3,100 tasks. The helicopters are preventing, investigating and disrupting crime. They are stopping domestic violence. They are finding missing people. They are our eyes in the sky. They are helping police keep Queenslanders safe. During 2016, this government made an almost \$30 million funding commitment to police helicopters by exercising the option to extend a contract with Surf Lifesaving Queensland for a further six years, until 2022. Whilst both helicopters, Polair 1 and 2, can be tasked anywhere in Queensland, they are primarily deployed within the south-eastern and Brisbane policing regions and also the Ipswich, Moreton and Sunshine Coast police districts of the southern policing region.

The helicopter service is provided under a contract arrangement with Surf Lifesaving Queensland, where Surf Lifesaving Queensland is responsible for providing the helicopters, the associated equipment and the pilots. However, the machines are crewed by two highly trained specialist police officers who direct operations and perform the role of tactical flight officers. Both helicopters are used extensively in search-and-rescue operations as they are fitted with state-of-the-art night-vision and infrared technology, making them the most capable rotary wing search assets in Queensland. In fact, during 2017-18, this technology allowed Polair to locate—wait for it—103 missing persons. Isn't that extraordinary?

Polair helicopters have also been responsible for locating 802 offenders during the last financial year. The offenders located by Polair were wanted for a diverse range of offences, including murder and attempted murder, rape, armed robbery, kidnapping, stalking, domestic violence, property offences and serious traffic offences.

This government has made a commitment to the Queensland community to address the threat of terrorism and serious and organised crime. Polair performed a vital role in this space during the last financial year and was involved in 385 counter-terrorism and covert surveillance operations. Polair also made a significant contribution to the Commonwealth Games.

Assistance has also been provided to our interstate policing jurisdictions, including 23 incidences where we have assisted the New South Wales Police Force during the last financial year. This assistance included search and rescue operations, high-risk-offender searches, domestic violence incidents, organised crime investigations and police pursuits.

Polair prides itself on its commitment to continuous improvement and innovation. Some of these innovations include the ability to down-link encrypted, live footage from the helicopter directly to police communication and disaster coordination centres right across the state as well as to iPads used by general duties officers. Think about that for a second, member: the footage taken by Polair can be

streamed directly to the hands of our police officers to assist them in the work they are doing. It is an amazing story about the investment the Queensland Police Service is making in technology to make for a better police service and a safer Queensland.

From tracking offenders to finding missing persons and providing real-time situational awareness, police helicopters are essential to keeping the community safe by providing quality support to front-line policing. At the operational level, police tactical flight officers and Surf Life Saving Queensland officers work as a cohesive team delivering high levels of performance in a challenging environment. As a community service organisation, Surf Life Saving Queensland is a valuable strategic partner for our Police Service. Queensland is unique among Australian policing jurisdictions in utilising this arrangement to provide its helicopter capability.

In 2017-18 Polair 1 performed 777 flights and Polair 2 performed 665 flights. Combined they responded to over 1,500 incidents tasked by police communication centres and also performed almost 1,600 routine patrol jobs. Whilst Polair 1 and 2 are invaluable for identifying vehicles of interest, they also support a wide range of operational activities for the Queensland Police Service and ultimately that builds a safer community.

**Mrs McMAHON:** Page 7 of the SDS makes reference to the QPS working in partnership with the community to increase road safety. Will the minister update the committee on safety issues facing motorcyclists and the Queensland Police Service's initiatives to reduce their over-representation in fatal and serious traffic crash data, including through Operation Grenadine?

**Mr RYAN:** Before I answer the member's question I want to correct the record. In an answer previously I put the value of the counter-terrorism centre at Wacol at \$58 million. It is \$53.8 million. That was just a reading error. We also took on notice a question directed to the commissioner earlier. It was a question in relation to police to population which the member for Toowoomba asked. The answer is 237 police per 100,000 people. On that point, it is not an arms race when it comes to policing numbers. It is about supporting our police to do the great work they are doing. Through modern policing methodologies and evidence based policing, using technology, being more flexible, agile and borderless and using task forces and hubs, we can absolutely do more work. I acknowledge the great work and investment that the commissioner has made in developing that capability.

In respect of the member's question, one of the best things about Queensland is our weather. It means that a lot of our community enjoy the opportunity to ride motorcycles—to get out and about. I know that the commissioner is a motorcycle rider. If you ever want a ride on the back of a motorcycle, the commissioner is available.

Unfortunately, we are seeing a trend in motorcycle riders, both drivers and passengers, being killed or hospitalised from traffic crashes. Research indicates that approximately three riders are hospitalised every day as a result of a traffic crash. The Road Policing Command launched Operation Grenadine—a statewide road safety campaign designed to stop the rising number of motorcyclists being killed and injured on Queensland roads. As minister I attended this launch with Assistant Commissioner Keating of the Road Policing Command.

We acknowledge that motorcycles represent just under five per cent of all registered vehicles in Queensland yet motorcycle riders represent close to 20 per cent of those killed on our roads. They are only five per cent of road users but represent 20 per cent of those killed on our roads. They are vulnerable road users.

The Road Policing Command continually reviews its operations to ensure that its methods include proactive and reactive, effects based strategies to deter, detect and disrupt negative driving behaviours. These statewide operations are supported by local motorcycle hotspot strategies and are aimed to increase awareness through education for both riders and other road users. We want to see all motorists sharing the road, judging road conditions and working together to ensure everyone gets home safely. The good news is that the response to this campaign has been positive, with riders engaging directly with police officers and transport inspectors.

In addition to these engagement strategies, there has been enforcement action in the form of registration and licence offences, speeding, illegal modifications and defects, and alcohol and drug detections. It is only through both education and enforcement with statewide operations, such as Operation Grenadine, that we can improve road safety. Motorists can expect to continue to see a high concentration of Road Policing Command officers conducting these and other operations throughout the state.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, I refer to question on notice No. 13, which says that 57 patched bikies are currently on bail. Can the commissioner advise how many of these individuals' bail applications were opposed by the police?

**Mr RYAN:** While the commissioner is gathering his thoughts on that, I point out that the member has not been clear about whether these offences are related to outlaw motorcycle gang activity. The offences could be as simple as shoplifting. They could be as simple as being involved in a traffic accident, which is a serious matter. They could be any number of offences. Unless the member wants to clarify for us whether he is referring to offences which are associated with being part of an outlaw motorcycle gang, I think his question is a bit of a nonsense.

**Mr WATTS:** The question is actually very clear. There are 57 patched bikies currently released—

**Mr RYAN:** What offences?

**Mr WATTS:** Not being held.

**Mr RYAN:** Your question is a nonsense.

**Mr WATTS:** Minister, is it okay if I talk or are you just going to talk over the top of me?

**Mr RYAN:** If you are not making sense—

**Mr LISTER:** Point of order, Mr Chair: the member is entitled to ask his question in silence.

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba North, could you clarify your question please?

**Mr WATTS:** I certainly can. Commissioner, there are 57 patched bikies currently out on bail. For how many of those did the police oppose the bail application?

**Commissioner Stewart:** I would have to take that question on notice to be able to give you an indication.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you. I would be more than happy for that to be taken on notice.

**Commissioner Stewart:** I think—

**Mr RYAN:** Let the commissioner answer.

**CHAIR:** Of course.

**Commissioner Stewart:** It does say OMCG members. Depending on the definition, that could be associate members. You mentioned patched members. That is not necessarily the case. Obviously the brief says 57 at the time that brief was prepared. It would not be difficult to find out the answer, but it will take some time for us to be able to do that, bearing in mind that the types of offences could be very broad. That would have been up to the court.

**Mr WATTS:** It may be illuminating for us to know the types of offences, in reference to the minister's point.

**Commissioner Stewart:** You are right. That is very important. If it is a shop stealing charge then we may not have opposed bail. We would have to provide that information to give you a proper context to each one.

**Mr RYAN:** As would be reasonable in circumstances depending on the nature of the offence. One other thing to say—

**Mr LISTER:** Point of order, Mr Chair: the question was to the Commissioner for Police and the minister is now speaking on his behalf.

**Mr RYAN:** I am allowed to talk to the topic.

**CHAIR:** There is no point of order.

**Mr RYAN:** It is estimates. It is meant to be a quiz of the portfolio and budget expenses.

**Mr LISTER:** It would be lovely if it were.

**Mr RYAN:** You are the one asking the questions and you have not asked too many direct to the budget at the moment.

**Mr LISTER:** We do not get enough of them.

**Mr RYAN:** It is a reflection on yourself.

**Mr WATTS:** I have one of those, so with the chair's permission I would be more than happy to ask a question directly related to the budget.

**CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr WATTS:** The minister is asking for a question. I have a question for the minister. I am more than happy to ask him a question. If he does not want me to ask it, I will not ask it.

**CHAIR:** Order! I remind the member that you are here by invitation.

**Mr RYAN:** This is specifically in relation to the question that has been taken on notice—that is, about patched members. They are not wearing their patches anymore because of our strongest, toughest, most comprehensive antibikie legislation in the nation. This is legislation that is being copied right across the country.

Our laws are effective in the way they are putting pressure on people who are participating in outlaw motorcycle gang activity. They are not allowed to wear their patches. They are not allowed to wear their colours now. We have seen bikies fleeing the jurisdiction and crossing the border into New South Wales to put their colours on. That shows how tough our laws are in this respect. It also shows our resolve—

**Mr WATTS:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**Mr RYAN:**—in respect of taking—

**CHAIR:** Allow the minister to speak.

**Mr RYAN:**—on the fight around motorcycle gangs.

**Mr WATTS:** Are you going to take the point of order, Chair?

**CHAIR:** What is your point of order?

**Mr WATTS:** My point of order relates to relevance. The question was: for how many of these did the police oppose the granting of bail? It is a very simple question. We have a short time and I have a further question ready to ask.

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba North, my understanding is that the minister has taken that question on notice.

**Mr WATTS:** Then that is answered.

**Mr RYAN:** There is specific information.

**Mr WATTS:** Let us move on to the next one.

**Mr RYAN:** I am able to provide a more fulsome answer.

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba North, this will be the last question in this block.

**Mr WATTS:** As a proportion of total government spending the QPS appropriation this year is 4.87 per cent whereas last year it was 5.06 per cent. Why does the Palaszczuk government not see its duty to keep Queenslanders safe as a priority and why has it cut the police budget, compared to overall spending?

**CHAIR:** I will give you the opportunity to rephrase the question. It is seeking an opinion.

**Mr WATTS:** No, it is very clear. It is not an opinion.

**CHAIR:** It contains an opinion.

**Mr WATTS:** These are facts.

**CHAIR:** The question itself contains an opinion.

**Mr RYAN:** I am happy to answer the question.

**Mr WATTS:** I am happy to rephrase the question as you asked, Chair.

**Mr RYAN:** You do not have to do that.

**Mr WATTS:** The facts of the matter are—

**Mr RYAN:** You do not have to re-ask it. I have the question.

**CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr WATTS:**—that the proportion of the budget—

**CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr WATTS:** You asked me—

**CHAIR:** And I called for order.

**Mr RYAN:** The fact of the matter is that the Queensland Police Service budget this year is about the same as it was last year. What did we have last year? We had the biggest event Queensland has ever hosted—the Commonwealth Games. It was an extraordinary event.

The budget last year is about the same as the budget this year. What are we doing with the budget this year? We are employing hundreds more police officers over the next few years. We are delivering more police boats and more police cars. We are delivering new policing facilities right across the state—Arundel, Kilcoy, Bowen, Caboolture. At Wacol we are providing a counter-terrorism facility. We are delivering more technology for our officers. We are supporting more training for our officers. The fact of the matter is that with the budget, which is about the same as it was last year, which included the Commonwealth Games, we are delivering more this year. This is a good commitment from the Palaszczuk government to our Queensland Police Service. I know that the commissioner, with the budget provided to him, will deliver on that outcome, which is keeping Queenslanders safe.


**Mr WATTS:** Just to confirm, Minister, it is smaller as a proportion of the overall budget than it was last year.

**CHAIR:** No, that was your last question, member for Toowoomba North. The committee will now adjourn for a break. I would like to thank officials from the Queensland Police Service for their attendance today. Answers to questions on notice need to be provided to the secretariat by 3 pm on Monday, 30 July. Minister, would you like to make some closing comments?

**Mr RYAN:** I will make a short closing statement. Can I first seek confirmation from the secretary that the questions on notice will be provided to us? Thank you. I start by thanking the committee for its consideration of the police and PSBA portfolio areas for this estimates hearing. I also take this opportunity to thank the parliamentary staff. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the outstanding team which is the Public Safety Business Agency and the Queensland Police Service. The work that they do every single day on our behalf is important work. It does create a safer community and we are very grateful for their service.

**CHAIR:** The hearing will resume at 3.45 pm with the examination of the estimates for the Corrective Services portfolio.

**Proceedings suspended from 3.31 pm to 3.45 pm.**

 **CHAIR:** Welcome back, Minister and officials. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure for the Corrective Services portfolio. Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement of no more than five minutes?

**Mr RYAN:** Yes, I do. As you are aware, following last year's election, the Palaszczuk government, recognising the importance of Queensland Corrective Services as a vital, front-line, public safety agency, created Queensland Corrective Services as a stand-alone department. This decision recognises the significant risk managed by Queensland Corrective Services on behalf of our community—incarcerating and managing the most dangerous, challenging and complex members of our society every day to keep our community safe. It is a challenging public safety role that is not well understood by the public, but every one of our over 5,000 corrective services officers do an exemplary job to protect the community.

A crucial milestone in the last year was the appointment of the Commissioner for Queensland Corrective Services, Mr Peter Martin. Mr Martin has had an outstanding career in public safety—38 years in the Queensland Police Service, where he rose to the rank of deputy commissioner after leading the transformation of the Queensland Police Service Ethical Standards Command and managing their Special Operations Command. Under Commissioner Martin's leadership, Queensland Corrective Services is preparing a 10-year plan to guide the future of this agency. An important part of this vision is the recent appointment of three deputy commissioners who will drive change and maturity in Queensland Corrective Services.

Deputy Commissioner Paul Stewart is probably well known to many in this room. He comes from the Queensland Police Service, where he was the Assistant Commissioner Community Policing Command. Along with Deputy Commissioner James Koulouris, who commences next week from New South Wales Corrective Services, and Deputy Commissioner Andrew Beck, formerly of the Department of Justice in Western Australia, all three deputies will bring a wealth of expertise and experience in front-line public safety operations and will support the work needed to help reshape the structure of Queensland Corrective Services into the future.

As you would be well aware, the Palaszczuk government is strongly committed to the reform of the parole system, with its \$265 million investment to implement the recommendations from

Mr Sofronoff's significant review. I am pleased to advise the committee that Queensland Corrective Services is well progressed with its work to implement and embed the recommendations from the Sofronoff review. As you are all aware, the Crime and Corruption Commission's Taskforce Flaxton is examining corruption risks in correctional settings. This important examination comes at a crucial time in the history of Queensland Corrective Services, and its findings will ensure we build Queensland Corrective Services into a mature, corruption resistant organisation.

Before I finish, I would like to mention the significant development in addressing overcrowding in our correctional centres. Since 2015, the Queensland government has made significant investments in expanding the capacity of our correctional facilities. This includes the 1,000 bunk bed program, the recommissioning of Borallon Training and Correctional Centre and the expansion of Capricornia Correctional Centre. All up, these investments, as well as other investments, will deliver almost 2,000 additional prisoner beds by 2021.

That being said, serious concerns have also been raised about overcrowding at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre. These concerns were put before the Crime and Corruption Commission's Taskforce Flaxton. We never want to get to the stage where three women are forced to share a prison cell built for one. That is why this government made a decision to transfer female prisoners from Brisbane women's prison to Southern Queensland Correctional Centre. This prison was originally intended for female prisoners. It is a move that will end overcrowding for female prisoners. It is also timely because the government has been considering the best operating models for prisons in Queensland. We want to make the best decision—one that reflects recent advice from the Crime and Corruption Commission that the current tender process for the two privately run prisons should be placed on hold in light of Taskforce Flaxton. We want to leave the door open to all options and will work with all stakeholders to achieve the best outcome.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work done by the Parole Board Queensland, and we are joined by the president of the Parole Board, and also the work done by the Prostitution Licensing Authority, and we are joined by the chair of the authority. Their extremely valuable work is ensuring that only suitable people own, operate and manage licensed brothels in Queensland. That is great work by the Prostitution Licensing Authority. To all members of the Prostitution Licensing Authority, the Parole Board Queensland and Queensland Corrective Services, I thank them for the work that they do on behalf of all of us.

**CHAIR:** I hand over to the deputy chair.

**Mr LISTER:** I refer my question to the member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr WATTS:** It is great to see the staff here today. As you know, I have been getting around the various prisons and I appreciate your time. My question is to the commissioner. Commissioner, in the department's submission to Taskforce Flaxton, you said that prisoner numbers have increased by 50 per cent since 2012 and, as at 31 March 2018, the prisoner population was 8,818. What is the forecast prisoner population the department is planning to meet in 2020?

**Mr RYAN:** I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. The member specifically referred to an active investigation and inquiry before the CCC. Before inviting the commissioner to answer the question, I wonder whether or not the member has sought advice from the chair of the CCC as to whether it is appropriate to be asking questions regarding evidence before the CCC.

**Mr WATTS:** These are public statements that were made surrounding numbers that were advised at the hearing. If those numbers are not the correct numbers—

**Mr RYAN:** No, the question—

**Mr WATTS:**—I am happy for the commissioner to highlight the numbers in 2012 and as at 31 March 2018 in this hearing.

**Mr RYAN:** Chair, it is quite clearly a question which refers to evidence before the CCC. It is reckless to ask a question about an active investigation before the CCC without seeking advice. The member—

**Mr WATTS:** The question—

**Mr RYAN:** Hang on. The member needs to assure all of us here that he has received advice from the chair of the CCC as to whether it is appropriate to ask these questions. Without that assurance, it shows disrespect to our independent watchdog and disrespect to the possible outcomes of Taskforce Flaxton.

**Mr WATTS:** Chair, the question is very simple and it does not refer to Flaxton. Flaxton was simply the place where the numbers could be confirmed.

**Mr RYAN:** No. You cannot ask a question that refers to Flaxton.

**Mr WATTS:** The question is: what is the forecast prisoner population the department is planning to meet in 2020?

**Mr RYAN:** I raise a point of order, Mr Chair. Is the member now seeking to reframe his question?

**CHAIR:** Yes, I think it has been reframed.

**Mr RYAN:** The member will need to first withdraw his question if he is referring to Taskforce Flaxton.

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba North, have you rephrased your question?

**Mr WATTS:** My question is very simple, Chair. What is the forecast prisoner population the department is planning to meet in 2020?

**Commissioner Martin:** I thank the member for the question. You have rightly pointed out our most pressing operational issue that we confront—the issue of overcrowding. Certainly the best predictor of the extent of the prison population that we are likely to confront into the future is the practices that we are currently experiencing through the court process.

At this stage—bearing in mind that we look at a low prediction and we look at a high prediction—the medium prediction that we are looking at to December 2020, notwithstanding the fact that today there is something in the order of 8,850 prisoners in prisons right across Queensland, our best predictions based upon if the same set of circumstances are to occur in December 2020 as they occur today then we could conceivably see 9,270 or so prisoners in Queensland in December 2020. That is the prediction we are looking at. Of course, that is predicated on the fact that all things remain the same, that all of the interventions that are being put in place right across the criminal justice system currently do not occur.

As you know, the reality is that we have no control over the prisoner number populations in Queensland. In terms of a departmental perspective, we control none of the levers that facilitate people coming into the prison system and, naturally enough, we control none of the levers as people leave that system. The challenge for us is to predict, using the best evidence basis and science to make an informed, rational decision about what those numbers are. At this stage, we believe that that could be, all things being equal, 9,270 by December 2020.

**Mr WATTS:** My next question is also to you, Commissioner. Do you believe there is a link between overcrowding, an inability to provide rehabilitation due to that overcrowding and increased recidivism?

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba North, you are asking for an opinion. Would you like to rephrase the question?

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, is there a link between—

**CHAIR:** No. I will ask you to rephrase again.

**Mr WATTS:** Either there is a link or there is not a link.

**CHAIR:** You are asking for the commissioner's opinion.

**Mr WATTS:** No, I am not. I am asking the commissioner is there a link between—

**CHAIR:** It is an opinion question. You are asking—

**Mr LISTER:** Mr Chair, it is not a question of opinion; it is question of—

**CHAIR:** Do not interrupt the chair. If you have a point of order, call a point of order and I will deal with it in turn. You are asking the commissioner 'Is there a link between overcrowding ... ' so you are seeking the commissioner's opinion which I will rule out of order. I will give you the opportunity to either rephrase your question or move on to the next question.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, is there evidence you are aware of from around the world that overcrowding and an inability to provide adequate rehabilitation leads to more recidivism?

**Commissioner Martin:** If I could address it by talking about the issue of rehabilitation more broadly—I will get to the heart of this issue in just a moment. The role of Queensland Corrective Services, naturally enough, is not just about locking up prisoners. It is also about doing everything we can to ensure that the people we have responsibility for are actually better people upon leaving



Corrective Services' facilities. At the point at which they are better people leaving the Corrective Services' facilities there is less likely to be reoffending and that makes the community safer, naturally enough.

A key responsibility of ours is to address the underlying causes of crime and to rehabilitate offenders and reduce their likelihood of reoffending. That is why in 2017-18, as at 30 June 2018, a total of 3,646 completions of rehabilitation programs in custody or in the community under the supervision of Queensland Corrective Services staff were achieved. The parole system review made a number of recommendations to expand the provisions of rehabilitation programs to create new intervention programs and to expand the opioid substitution treatment program in prisons. To implement these recommendations, the government committed \$265 million over six years, with works underway by Queensland Corrective Services. To the heart of your issue, expanding and creating new rehabilitation programs responsibly takes time and all the programs must be supported by empirical research to ensure that they work.

The offender programs and services accreditation panel ensure that all offender programs are evidence based and meet nationally accredited standards known to support desistance from offending. Corrective Services cannot rehabilitate offenders alone, and the department works with the community to deliver quality interventions and to break the cycle of reoffending.

QCS funds a range of external providers to deliver services in the areas of education and employment, chaplaincy services, substance abuse, re-entry support services, youthful offender programs and specialised psychological services and parenting programs. Importantly, probation and parole also works with local community based organisations to address individual needs of offenders under supervision in the community.

To the very heart of your issue, it is no surprise—and I have spent a great deal of energy saying this—that the issue of overcrowding is incredibly important. It is my most pressing operational issue. The pressure on the prison system is significant, and that is why we are taking a multidimensional, multifaceted approach to dealing with these issues to ameliorate the effects that overcrowding presents. I know that the minister has specific knowledge about this. Chair, with your indulgence, I will hand to the minister.

**CHAIR:** Minister, do you wish to add something?

**Mr RYAN:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

**Mr LISTER:** Point of order, Mr Chair: there is no scope in the standing orders for a chief executive to refer an answer up to the minister.

**CHAIR:** No, I asked the minister whether he wished to add anything and the minister has acknowledged that he does.

**Mr LISTER:** It should come out of government time.

**CHAIR:** I warn the member to not be disorderly.

**Mr LISTER:** Thank you, Mr Chair. I will remember that.

**Mr RYAN:** All I was going to refer to is that there was a question on notice in respect of this matter. I think it is question on notice No. 10. Perhaps the member would like to read the questions on notice first.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, the current rate of overpopulation in Queensland prisons is 131 per cent. On current planning with the forecasts you have just provided in your previous answer, what will be the forecast overpopulation in 2020?

**Commissioner Martin:** I would need to take that on notice and have a look at the current projections with the built environment work that is currently in train. What I can tell you is that the work that is occurring and the extra capability that is coming online at Borallon, the work that has been done over the last couple of years to bring extra capability online at Capricornia and the 1,000 bunk bed program that has been funded and fundamentally is rolling out and is on target, will to a significant degree address some of the issues that we confront. Notwithstanding the trends for the future, the issue of overcrowding is the subject of detailed conversations that are currently being had at the highest levels of government around future business cases that need to be made to address the longer term issue of overcrowding.

With regard to your specific issue in terms of the gap between the forecast in December 2020 and what will be the built environment need, I will need to take that on notice. Notwithstanding the strategies we currently have in place that ameliorate the effect of that, we also have in train a number

of very comprehensive business cases that we are very much looking forward to putting forward to government for consideration of future investment.

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

**Mr RYAN:** Yes.

**Mr WATTS:** I understand clearly about the bunk bed arrangements and the doubling up there. What provisions are there to increase the ability for rehabilitation so that we can reduce recidivism?

**Commissioner Martin:** I mentioned before that we are doing an enormous amount of work to partner with the non-government sector—the not-for-profits. We contract a range of services to facilitate rehabilitation, but the work around programming in prison facilities across Queensland is quite extraordinary. We have dedicated staff facilitating programming including the work of our partner agencies in Queensland Health around rehabilitation and programming.

Some of the impressive work that is occurring from one end of Queensland to the other in correctional centres around industries is also worthy of mention. As I go around to each of the correctional centres I am incredibly surprised by the really practical efforts locally to address the issue of people's ability to find meaningful work upon their release. Bear in mind that the vast majority of people in Queensland Corrective Services facilities today will one day leave those facilities. My absolute aim is to make them better people. My aim is to get them into stable accommodation, and my hope is that they can be engaged in meaningful work. The work that is occurring around metal fabrication, the work that is occurring for women around hairdressing and skills such as barista skills—these are skills that are highly transportable. They are translatable into everyday life, and these things are ultimately fulfilling people's sense of worth. They are helping them make amends for their past behaviour and, importantly, my hope is that at the point of their release they will facilitate their smooth transition into the community where they have skills to fall back on.

There are some wonderful examples that I have seen where prisoners have been engaged in particular skills—manufacturing metal componentry for primary producers such as cattle grates, cattle grids and those types of things—and have picked up work with the company that is contracting with us to do that work. That is really quite extraordinary. It is a wonderful example of what can be achieved. I think we can do more work like that. I think expanding prison industries to seven days a week has been a wonderful example of what can be achieved in setting people up in the right way for their ultimate success when they leave us.

**CHAIR:** Minister, would you like to add anything?

**Mr RYAN:** Only to refer to question on notice No. 10, which I directed the member to before. I hope we do not have to do it again because it will get to the point of repetition.

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba North, do you have a question?

**Mr WATTS:** I do.

**CHAIR:** This will be the last question in your block.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, to be clear, is it the department's evidence to this committee that overcrowded prisons lead to more crime because inmates are not being properly rehabilitated?

**Mr RYAN:** Point of order, Mr Chair: that is again asking for an opinion.

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba North, you are seeking the commissioner's opinion on the nexus between overcrowding and people reoffending. I will give you the opportunity to rephrase the question.

**Mr WATTS:** With the greatest of respect, Chair, when I checked this question with the Clerk he told me that it meets all standing orders.

**CHAIR:** I am the chair and I have just ruled that you are seeking an opinion. I have given you an opportunity to rephrase the question. You can either rephrase the question or I will rule it out of order and that will be the last question for you in this block.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, I do not know why they do not want you to answer the question, but my question is very clear: is your evidence that an overcrowded prison means that we cannot rehabilitate offenders?

**Commissioner Martin:** The answer to the question is no, and I think I specified that before with the range of efforts that we are putting in place to rehabilitate prisoners currently. It is not the fact that the prison population does not get access to rehabilitation. It makes it more challenging. We have to be

more creative in terms of how we use our staff and how we use the built environment to deliver those education programs.

I draw your attention to the SDS, particularly page 5 regarding prisoners and education. The target is 32 per cent. We exceed that by 36.6 per cent. What that shows is the dedication and tenacity of our staff and their ability to make the system work optimally by giving this a very significant focus to get the best outcomes that they can and particularly focus on rehabilitation, notwithstanding some of the challenges we confront that ultimately we are endeavouring to work with.

**CHAIR:** Minister, I refer you to page 2 of the SDS which refers to enhancing the safety of corrective services officers. Will the minister please provide advice on initiatives and programs in place to enhance the safety of staff in a corrective services environment?

**Mr RYAN:** Thank you, Chair. That is a very important question. The Palaszczuk government has zero tolerance for violence in Queensland's correctional facilities. The safety of every one of our officers is paramount, and great efforts are made to ensure every officer returns home safely at the end of their shift. Queensland Corrective Services dedicates effort to examine the causes of assault and the situations in which it occurs and provisions our corrective services officers with the security equipment and accoutrements to improve the safety and security of the correctional environment.

Our violence prevention strategy has initiatives to enhance the safety of staff, visitors and prisoners including by using body worn cameras. Hot spots are monitored and incidents are analysed to address trends and boost staff safety. In support of this strategy we have rolled out additional body worn cameras for Queensland government run correctional centres. As at 30 June 2018, 160 body worn cameras are available for use in publicly operated high-security facilities around the state.

I am committed to the use of body worn cameras for our corrective services officers, and I am also committed to the issue of load-bearing vests for them. The load-bearing vests we are issuing to corrective services officers are of a similar type and specification to those used by their colleagues in the Queensland Police Service. I am very pleased to advise that Queensland Corrective Services has an internal budget allocation to ensure we are able to provision every custodial correctional officer with a load-bearing vest for the secure attachment of cameras and other security accoutrements. So far 1,350 vests have been delivered to our publicly operated correctional centres, with a further 1,300 due by the end of the year.

Custodial officers are trained in de-escalation techniques, control and restraint, weapons and first aid, and are supported by an array of safety and security equipment including those body worn cameras, tactical and riot gear, and the use of chemical agents. Their ability to de-escalate situations ensures that incidents are quickly brought under control and any assaults are limited.

Beyond the available accoutrements and techniques in use presently, the commissioner is determined to take a systemic look at use of force in Queensland Corrective Services and how Queensland Corrective Services can provide long-term and sustainable improvements in safety. To that end, Commissioner Martin has committed to a full use-of-force review, which will be led by Deputy Commissioner Andrew Beck when he commences in August 2018. The use-of-force review will be a key and foundational strategy as part of the Queensland Corrective Services 10-year plan, which will have safety as its primary focus. Queensland Corrective Services is also working collaboratively with staff and the representative employee groups, the Together union and United Voice, to improve safety in the short term through a range of considered and appropriate safety measures.

Queensland Corrective Services has already commenced a range of initial measures including procuring a number of vests which are being manufactured and corresponding body worn cameras for staff as well as boosting staff numbers in response to an increasing prisoner population. The use-of-force review will examine the existing skill levels of custodial correctional officers with respect to use of force, the relevant training regimes and practices of Queensland Corrective Services, the availability and use of equipment and accoutrements, and the use of technology to enhance staff safety. The review will result in a range of longer term recommendations to ultimately enhance the safety of our staff. It will also provide an evidence based framework to support any case for the procurement of additional equipment, technology and training.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Page 4 of the SDS relates to prisoner-on-officer assaults and assault rates. Can the minister please advise the committee of steps that have been taken and are being taken to reduce the number of assaults on our hardworking prison officers?

**Mr RYAN:** That is a good follow-on question. The safety of every Corrective Services officer is paramount to us, and great efforts are made to ensure every officer returns home safely. Custodial

officers work in a highly dynamic and potentially dangerous situation, and Queensland Corrective Services is committed to giving them the support and resources necessary for their own safety and the safety of prisoners. One assault is one assault too many.

However, I acknowledge that, due to the nature of the correctional environment and the situations our Corrective Services officers must face to preserve safety and security, incidents unfortunately can and do occur. I am encouraged by recent data that demonstrates the strategies put in place during 2017-18 to improve staff safety are reducing assaults on our hardworking Corrective Services officers. This demonstrates that what we are doing—our commitment to staff safety—is working. What makes this more significant is that these decreases have been experienced in a period of sustained growth in the prison system, with more prisoners than we have ever had before.

In 2017-18 there were six staff who were victims of a serious assault at a rate of 0.07 per 100 prisoners. This is a decrease from last year, which had a rate of 0.11 per 100 prisoners. In 2017-18, there were 49 staff who were victims of an assault at a rate of 0.57 per 100 prisoners. This is a significant decrease on last year's rate of 1.01 per 100 prisoners. In addition to the decreasing rate of assaults on staff, I can also report to the committee that the rate of serious assault and assault of prisoner against prisoner has also decreased from the previous financial year.

How are we achieving these reductions? It is worth repeating what I stated in my answer to the first question. That is, our violence prevention strategy has initiatives to enhance the safety of officers, visitors and prisoners by things such as: our body worn cameras; our rollout of the load bearing vest to support the attachment of cameras and other security accoutrements; and our continued investment in the training of our officers, ensuring that they have the best training to deal with those very challenging situations.

It is important to note as well our absolute zero tolerance approach to contraband—that is, any introduction of contraband into a correctional centre, such as illicit drugs or other banned items, is prohibited because it puts our officers at risk due to associated behavioural effects on prisoners. For this reason, a range of surveillance techniques is used to prevent, detect and swiftly respond to contraband of any kind, including robust security procedures and intelligence led operations with Queensland Corrective Services and the Queensland Police Service. Importantly, should an assault occur in our correctional centres, prisoners will be held to account for their actions. Prisoners involved in violence can and do face the consequences of their actions, which include criminal charges and the loss of privileges. Their behaviour is also considered by the Parole Board Queensland as part of any parole application.

Officers who are assaulted in the line of duty are supported by our agency to lodge a claim for workers compensation to cover leave, medical expenses and lost wages and are assisted in their graduated or full return to work. Our employee assistance program also provides free and confidential counselling services to support officers and their families 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Mrs McMAHON:** I refer to page 3 of the SDS which refers to addressing the demand on the correctional system. Will the minister please clarify claims around the provision or otherwise of 650 beds for prisoners?

**Mr RYAN:** I am glad to have the opportunity to once and for all put this issue to bed because we often hear the LNP crow about their so-called 650 bed program and it is time to call them out on it. They constantly claim that, when they were in government, they intended to create an additional 650 beds. However, we know because they sit on the opposition benches for starters that they were never even capable of delivering on that—and of course the opposition is the place where they deserve to stay for many, many years.

Since the LNP have been in opposition, they have repeatedly claimed this government is doing nothing about prison overcrowding. While the LNP have been talking—mostly to themselves—about this issue, they apparently have not noticed that quite a lot is happening in our prisons. I know it is always inconvenient for those on the opposition benches to hear the truth but, notwithstanding that, here are the facts. The LNP's often cited plan to increase prisoner beds included either recommissioning existing capacity or low-security accommodation, which included the recommissioning of the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre. Tick, already done. The plan would have seen prisoners accommodated at Borallon Training and Correctional Centre in an older style prison cell with hanging points that would have posed significant risks to prisoners. The Palaszczuk government, because we are committed to safe prisons, ensured that we in response undertook extensive modifications to those 244 older style cells to ensure prisoners were accommodated in a safe and secure environment. These cells are now commissioned.

The other prison beds announced by the LNP in 2014 have all been delivered either long ago or by our government. Those beds are: the Numinbah Correctional Centre, 30 beds, tick, delivered; the refurbishment and recommissioning of the Harold Gregg Unit at the Townsville Correctional Centre, tick, 72 beds delivered; and the commissioning of additional cells at Lotus Glen Correctional Centre, tick, 72 beds delivered.

We are installing more beds and bunk beds. In doing so, we are removing mattresses from the floors of cells to improve living conditions and increase the safety of prisoners and staff by decreasing the impacts of overcrowding. In July last year, I announced that our 1,000 purpose built bunk bed program would be installed in Queensland's correctional centres over two years, and we are making good progress. The first 644 bunk beds have already been delivered, with bunks installed at the Brisbane, Lotus Glen, Woodford and Townsville men's and women's correctional centres and at the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre.

Since July last year, when taking into account the final stages of recommissioning the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre, a total of 888 beds have been built or recommissioned and are now available for prisoners to occupy—which is much more than 650. A further \$41 million has been approved in the budget to increase the expansion and capacity of the Capricornia Correctional Centre by 84 cells. This means a further 745 beds will be installed at the Capricornia, Wolston and Maryborough correctional centres by September 2020. This will increase the total number of additional cells statewide to 592. In fact, once all capital works construction has been completed by 2021, over 1,985 prisoner beds will have been delivered since our government came to power in February 2015. Tick.

Queensland Corrective Services is also reconfiguring and modifying cells to allow more permanent beds to be built where it is safe to do so. The installation of bunk beds is just one strategy that this government is implementing to address the impacts of increasing prisoner numbers.

**CHAIR:** I hand back to the deputy chair.

**Mr LISTER:** I refer to the member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, I recently had a visit to the Princess Alexandra Hospital Secure Unit. When was the last time a safety review or audit was done at that ward and what were the findings?

**Commissioner Martin:** I thank you for the question. As you know, the PAHSU is a challenging piece of infrastructure. The work that the officers do there on a day-to-day basis is remarkable. The throughput through that facility is quite extraordinary. The work they do, together with our colleagues in Queensland Health, is really quite remarkable in terms of provisioning for the safety, security and health needs of very complex people.

The minister rightly pointed out a short time ago the complexity of the health needs and the complexity of the needs of the people in our custody and care. That particular facility though is a facility that is run by Queensland Health. We work very cooperatively with Queensland Health, specifically on the issue of a security audit that was facilitated at the PAHSU. I cannot tell you specifically when that occurred, and I do not know the outcomes of any such review that might have occurred. That is something that, with concurrence, I would need to take on notice.

**Mr RYAN:** We will double check if there is anyone here who can answer it instead of taking it on notice. In the meantime, while we check if there is someone here who can answer it, can I provide an answer to a question on notice taken earlier in relation to the Mongrel Mob?

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr RYAN:** I am advised that the Police Commissioner wrote to the Attorney-General's Department in May this year in respect of this matter. Further, it was progressed to the Attorney-General in June. I am informed that it was approved by the Attorney-General in July this year and subsequently sent on.

**Commissioner Martin:** I can confirm that there is no-one here who can answer that specific question.

**Mr RYAN:** I am happy to take it on notice then.

**Mr WATTS:** Is there anybody else here who may be able to help me understand some of the risks surrounding the Princess Alexandra Hospital Secure Unit and the threat of the introduction of drugs into the prison system?

**Commissioner Martin:** I would be very happy to talk to that. Naturally enough, there are times when prisoners for very good, legitimate and valid reasons have to leave the security of a correctional

centre. In some cases, it is a visit to a court. In other cases, it is a visit to a watch house as a prelude to court. At other times, it is a visit for medical assistance beyond the scope of a correctional centre.

In the case that a prisoner is removed from a correctional centre and taken to the Princess Alexandra Hospital Secure Unit, that is facilitated by the Escort and Security Branch. The Escort and Security Branch are Queensland Corrective Services staff utilising the techniques and protocols of Queensland Corrective Services and vehicles of Queensland Corrective Services. The prisoner is removed under very stringent circumstances and taken to the PAHSU. The prisoner is assessed and dealt with by medical professionals.

There is always a risk at that particular juncture—where a prisoner comes into contact with somebody not from Queensland Corrective Services—of transference of equipment or things that might otherwise cause a harm. On each and every occasion that that occurs, there are stringent protocols in place and there is supervision of the relevant person and the use of the built environment. This includes assessing people and ensuring they do not bring illegitimate equipment or items that otherwise might harm the prisoner, other prisoners or in fact the staff member. There are those protocols in place. After the individual is assessed, dealt with and treated, they are returned from whence they came—again, by Queensland Corrective Services staff using the facilities of Escort and Security Branch, which is a resource of the department.

**Mr WATTS:** Again, just focusing on this particular unit, which is a 20-year-old unit, is its capacity adequate for the current prison population?

**Commissioner Martin:** No, it is not. It suffers significant challenges currently and that is well and truly acknowledged. Certainly, this is a very important conversation that we are having with Queensland Health. Queensland Health are the owners of the facility. What I can tell you is that—as with any other piece of infrastructure that Queensland Corrective Services ultimately utilises or alternatively has access to—we do everything we can to use the available resources in the most prodigious way that gets the best outcomes for the prisoner. More importantly, we do what we can so as not to compromise staff safety. It is a particular piece of infrastructure that has finite capacity. You made mention before of the growth in prisoner numbers that have occurred since 2012. This particular piece of infrastructure has finite capacity and it is under pressure, and we acknowledge that.

**Mr WATTS:** I have a further question about this secure unit. In terms of physical barrier for people entering—normally when I visit various prisons there is a scan, a rotating door, a metal detector and many other things. Can you explain to us the physical security that exists for both prisoners as they move in and out of that secure facility and doctors and other health staff as they move in and out of that facility?

**Commissioner Martin:** I have somebody here with me who has a great degree of knowledge about the PAHSU. With your concurrence, I would be happy to defer to them for a complete answer. I introduce to you Acting Deputy Commissioner Peter Shaddock.

**Deputy Commissioner Shaddock:** Thank you for the invitation to be here and talk. If I can address the member's specific question, I was lucky enough to host a recent visit from your good self to the PAHSU last week following a visit to the women's correctional centre. Specifically, you may recall we walked through some of the processes involved with how the prisoners are arrived from the centres through the vehicle lock and, as the commissioner has explained, the security intelligence protocols wrapped around that transfer from a correctional facility to the PAHSU. It is a unique environment; there is no doubt about that. I have had the opportunity to be general manager of that particular site over a period of time, so I know firsthand what the staff have to manage on a daily basis, and they do a remarkable job. It is a gazetted prison, as you are well aware. We work in very close concert with our colleagues at QHealth. There is a patient aspect and a prisoner aspect to it. It is that melding of that operational overlay that ensures the staff at ESB, particularly the PAHSU, do a remarkable job.

Some of the things that you saw as we entered that facility the other day include that we had you on camera from the moment you drove up to the site external of walking down to where I met you. That happens for all people. Most of the clinicians come from the PA Hospital proper, so they do not come in through the vehicle lock and things like that. They go through the walk-through scanner that you walked through yourself. You were under camera surveillance at that time. We do not have body worn cameras in that environment, as we spoke about on your visit. The staff—the QHealth clinicians there—the Nurse Unit Manager, Suruj Noor, and her team are generally the same team in the same environment for consistency of practice reasons.

Site assessments are conducted when the prisoner is taken from that location into the PA Hospital proper for some treatment or assessment. They are accompanied by our staff. It is an individual

risk assessment. We have done the intelligence checks on the individuals leaving the correctional facilities before they even get to the PA Hospital: who they are, what is the background, what are the issues with them, what are the associations, what is the level of compromise and risk? We match that with our escort and restraint matrix. If I had some concerns I may have two officers, I may have a third officer, I may have a third officer who is a delta unit or an armed officer. As I explained the other day on our short visit there, we also work with our colleagues at QPS. They have a Queensland Police Service Police Beat there. We will engage their services as well.

When we spoke last week we also gave the example of moving maximum security prisoners through that environment, how we actually manage those and identify risks. There are a lot of stages, a lot of gates and a lot of checks; a lot of preparation goes through those. They are over and above things like the removal-of-clothing searches. When the prisoners return to their centre the searches are done and the Arunta phone calls are listened to. We know the prisoner, we know the environment and we manage the risk on an individual basis. I hope that answers the question of the member.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you. Minister, I have a question for you. The Victims of Crime Assistance Act sets out a charter of victims' rights that applies to all government agencies and officials. The first of those rights at the top of the charter states that the victim will be treated with courtesy, compassion, respect and dignity, taking into account the victim's needs. Can you explain why the Parole Board and QCS trashed the Pullens' right to be treated with courtesy—

**CHAIR:** Point of order.

**Mr WATTS:**—compassion—

**CHAIR:** Point of order.

**Mr WATTS:**—and respect—

**CHAIR:** Point of order! There are clear imputations in that question. I will give you the opportunity to rephrase the question, or I will rule the question out of order.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you, Chair. I will ask the question a different way, if I may. I refer to the no-body no-parole issue. Minister, after these events were exposed you were asked why victim notification had to be stopped, why it could not proceed in tandem with the no-body no-parole review, which the Parole Board president apparently promised you behind closed doors the day before. During your infamous media conference with the Pullens you answered, 'That's a matter for the president of the Parole Board and obviously Corrective Services.' Given that the Parole Board president and QCS have yet to answer this critically important question, will you please enlighten the committee now, or have them do so?

**Ms McMILLAN:** Point of order.

**Mr RYAN:** I am happy to answer the question.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Point of order. I am concerned about the preamble, but if the minister is prepared to—

**Mr RYAN:** I am happy to answer the question.

**CHAIR:** I ask the member for Toowoomba North to just ask the question. I have given you a fair bit of latitude with the preamble.

**Mr RYAN:** Chair, it is not necessary to repeat. I get the question and I thank the member for the question. Member, I have apologised publicly and privately to the Pullens. I have received advice that the Pullens want to move forward with the matter and I think that is where the matter needs to go.

**Mr WATTS:** Back to you, Commissioner. I refer to the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre. Can I ask how many cameras are currently installed at that facility in the industry section and how many additional cameras will be installed before it receives female inmates?

**Commissioner Martin:** That is an incredibly specific question, notwithstanding how many corrective services facilities there are in Queensland and how many sub-elements there are within a corrective services facility, and I do not have that information at my disposal. I say to you, though, that you have underpinned a very important element of security overlay of any corrective services facility and that is the investment in CCTV. We are constantly reviewing the CCTV footprint in every correctional centre around Queensland. Bearing in mind that SQCC is currently a privately run facility, that is largely a matter for the private provider but in consult with Queensland Corrective Services. We work very collaboratively to make sure that we provide whatever assistance we can in order to keep the prison population safe. As the minister rightly pointed out, my No. 1 strategy is around the safety of

everybody in a corrective services facility, particularly the staff. This is a very important issue. Can I just take that on notice for the moment? I am sorry, we do not have specific information about the CCTV coverage in the industry section of SQCC. We would need to take that on notice.

**CHAIR:** Are you happy to put the question on notice?

**Mr WATTS:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Minister are you happy to take that question on notice?

**Mr RYAN:** Of course.

**Commissioner Martin:** Mr Chair, can you indulge me for one minute?

**CHAIR:** Yes, Commissioner.

**Commissioner Martin:** I made a comment earlier about the education participation. I made a slight error. I had indicated that the participation rate was 36.6 per cent and, in fact, it is 36.2 per cent. It is a minor error but I just wanted to set the record straight.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Commissioner. I hand over to the deputy chair.

**Mr LISTER:** I defer to the member for Maiwar for a question.

**Mr BERKMAN:** My question relates to the government's recent decision to convert Southern Queensland Correctional Centre into Queensland's first-ever private women's prison. I ask this question in the context of recent revelations of serious sexual and other violence at a private men's prison, the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, and Serco's track record on human rights in Australia and abroad. Minister, how do you justify the privatisation of women's prison services in Queensland, and will you reverse this decision, bringing the facility back into public hands?

**Mr RYAN:** I thank the member for the question. I of course refer to my opening statement. The fact of the matter is that we have significant capacity constraints at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre. I do not think anyone can support the decision not to expand women's infrastructure capacity in the state. At the moment we have women in Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre sleeping on concrete floors with their heads next to toilets. It is just an unacceptable situation. We are close to having three women share a cell that is designed for one. I do not know how anyone can say a decision to expand female correctional capacity in this state is not a good decision. What this decision will do is get all the women off the floor. That is what this decision will do. It will expand opportunities for women to access health services, rehabilitation services and support services and, in turn, will help with their life after prison. I am sure the commissioner has some things to say about this as well.

**Commissioner Martin:** I certainly have. This is an incredibly important initiative. When I came into this role some 8½ months ago, I was not here very long before I determined that this was the most pressing issue confronting Queensland Corrective Services—not only the issue of overcrowding but, importantly, the issue of overcrowding as it applies to women. The reason for that is: despite the fact that women make up a relatively small component—something in the order of about 11 or 12 per cent of the totality of the prisoner population in Queensland—the infrastructure designated for women currently is finite. Because of that, any rise that occurs in terms of women's numbers impacts dramatically on the infrastructure.

In terms of overcrowding, while across-the-board we had somewhere in the order of 125 to 130 per cent, it was amplified when it came to women to 170 or 175 per cent. It was further even amplified when it came to residential units, where there was a net effect of something in the order of 200 per cent within residential units in places like Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre.

Utilising Southern Queensland Correctional Centre as a women's prison, bearing in mind it was built for the needs of women some years ago, is a wonderful strategy from a number of perspectives. Not only does it dramatically address the critical issue of women's overcrowding, as the minister rightly pointed out, in the short, the medium and the longer term; importantly, it increases the ability for us to rehabilitate to give access to industries and programs for women that are critical to their success at the point at which they leave us.

The other thing that needs to be kept in mind is that Southern Queensland Correctional Centre also has purpose-built facilities specifically for the health needs of women and particularly mothers who are prisoners and their babies. Not only is this a practical benefit for us, not only does it ameliorate a significant degree of risk across the system; it gets better outcomes for prisoners, which increases their ability to make the transition out of corrective services facilities, sets them up for success for the future and, importantly, makes the community safer. It is a wonderful initiative. Of all the other options I



currently have at my disposal, this is the most effective option, the best option and the option that will get us the most significant return on investment and the earliest one.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Thank you for the detailed response, Commissioner. I very much appreciate it. I might just follow up with a very quick question, Mr Chair.

**CHAIR:** This will have to be the last in this block.

**Mr BERKMAN:** The unanswered portion of that question relates to whether the facility will be brought back into public hands. If not, Minister, can you guarantee that all of the same support services currently available to women in the Brisbane women's prison will be extended to every single prisoner at Gatton?

**Mr RYAN:** I am advised by the commissioner that, yes, we can provide that guarantee. In respect of the first part of your supplementary question, I refer you to my opening statement.

**Ms McMILLAN:** I refer the minister to page 3 of the SDS, which refers to short, medium and long-term strategies to address overcrowding in Queensland's correctional centres. Will the minister please advise what steps have been taken and are being taken to ease the pressure on Queensland's correctional system?

**Mr RYAN:** The Palaszczuk government is actively working to ease the pressure on Queensland's prisons. Infrastructure in the 2018-19 budget includes: converting the 302-bed Southern Queensland Correctional Centre into a women's prison; delivering a further 84 cells and beds at the Capricornia Correctional Centre; continuing work on the 264 cells and beds being built from within the initial funding package of \$200 million allocated in 2016-17; providing funding of \$10.5 million over two years to upgrade wastewater treatment plants and other equipment at correctional centres and the conversion of special observation cells; continuing to install purpose-built bunk beds as part of our 1,000 bunk bed program across Queensland correctional centres; and providing funding of \$3.9 million over three years to expand the Supreme Court Bail Program.

As I have mentioned previously, once all construction is completed by 2021 over 1,985 prisoner beds will have been delivered since our government was elected. The expansion of Capricornia will support 172 jobs for four years in the Central Queensland region during construction and more than 130 ongoing jobs after the prison is commissioned. It will also provide significant training opportunities through the Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy.

Infrastructure is not the only way we are easing overcrowding. We are also investing heavily in the sweeping reforms of the Queensland Parole System Review, the Sofronoff review, to improve community safety. The reforms include increasing rehabilitation opportunities for prisoners to address key underlying causes of offending such as substance abuse before they are released. Re-entry services help prisoners desist from reoffending by resolving barriers to a safe return to the community. Prisoners who have access to basic needs such as appropriate identification, accommodation, income support, prerelease planning and post-release support have a better chance of remaining offence free.

The government recognises the pressures placed on the correctional system by remand. These prisoners make up around 30 per cent of the prisoner population. The impact of remand is most keenly felt at the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre. In response, Queensland Corrective Services has contracted Sisters Inside to deliver the Supreme Court Bail Program, and Sisters Inside are delivering real results—and also real savings for the state—by reducing remand numbers and the cost to accommodate prisoners. Since commencing in South-East Queensland in March 2016, a total of 61 women have been released to bail from the Brisbane Women's and Numinbah correctional centres. This represents 11,000 saved bed days, providing a cost saving to the government as at 30 June 2018 of almost \$800,000. Since January 2017, when the service was extended to the Townsville Women's Correctional Centre, a further 18 women have been released to bail. This represents a saving of 2,214 saved bed days, which of course provides further cost savings to the government.

In this budget the Palaszczuk government has provided funding of \$3.9 million over three years to expand the very successful Supreme Court Bail Program. This will ensure that male prisoners who are remanded due to homelessness or other vulnerabilities are better able to access bail. Queensland Corrective Services is also working closely with other departments to identify broader demand management solutions such as the Department of Housing and Public Works housing strategy for women on parole. Investing in these demand management strategies is a focus of this government. It is about addressing the underlying causes of offending rather than building more prisons to accommodate more prisoners.

The capital investment plan for Queensland Corrective Services focuses on managing growth in prisoner numbers by providing additional prisoner infrastructure and correctional centre enhancements. These significant works to grow and enhance our correctional centres to fit demands statewide will continue this year. In the 2018-19 financial year we will see the completion of upgrades to the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre after the centre recently completed the final recommissioning of its 492 cells with a 736-bed capacity. The Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre will also see enhancements to prisoner support services, and the Woodford Correctional Centre will see the completion of their enhanced prisoner support services. There are various projects to enhance and provide supporting infrastructure, including contingency accommodation expansions at Wacol and Townsville. A fit-out to accommodate electronic monitoring surveillance staff will also take place.

**CHAIR:** Page 3 of the SDS refers to the rollout of bunk beds in Queensland's correctional centres, and I ask: will the Minister please provide a progress report to the committee on the rollout of the 1,000 bunk bed program?

**Mr RYAN:** Queensland Corrective Services is actively working to decrease the pressure in Queensland's prisons and ensure that prison conditions remain humane, safe and secure. Installing more beds and bunk beds is about removing mattresses from the floors of cells to improve living conditions and increase the safety of prisoners and staff by decreasing the impacts of overcrowding. As I mentioned earlier, last year I announced that 1,000 purpose-built bunk beds will be installed in Queensland correctional centres over the next few years. The first 644 bunk beds have already been delivered, with bunks installed at the Brisbane, Lotus Glen, Woodford and Townsville correctional centres and the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre. Taking into account the final stage of recommissioning at the Borallon Training and Correctional Centre, since July last year a total of 888 beds have been built or recommissioned and are now available for prisoners to occupy.

In addition, in this year's budget a further \$41 million has been approved to increase the expansion of the Capricornia Correctional Centre by 84 cells. It is worth repeating that, once construction is completed by 2021, we will have almost 2,000 extra permanent beds for prisoners since our government was elected in 2015. QCS is also reconfiguring and modifying cells to allow more permanent beds to be built where it is safe to do so. The installation of bunk beds is just one strategy this government is implementing to address the impacts of prisoner numbers.

**Mrs McMAHON:** I refer to page 2 of the SDS in relation to building a high-performing culture and I ask: will the Minister please provide the committee with an update on the Queensland Corrective Services restructure following machinery-of-government changes and its transition to a stand-alone department?

**Mr RYAN:** It is with great excitement that I again refer to the appointment of Commissioner Peter Martin as the Commissioner of Queensland Corrective Services in November last year following his 38 years of distinguished service with the Queensland Police Service. During his time with the Queensland Police Service Commissioner Martin took responsibility for the strategic direction, leadership and delivery of policing services right across Queensland as the Deputy Commissioner for Regional Operations. Prior to this he was the Assistant Commissioner for Ethical Standards Command and was responsible for integrity, discipline and professionalism across the Queensland Police Service.

Due to machinery-of-government changes after the state election, this led to a significant outcome for Queensland Corrective Services. Queensland Corrective Services became a department in its own right. It is the start of a new era for Queensland Corrective Services as it works towards becoming a world-class agency—a top-tier public safety agency—which embraces significant reforms and is developing a 10-year strategic plan to meet the demands, challenges and opportunities of the future. Things are very different under our government compared to the previous Newman LNP government, and our government will continue to work hard to develop a Queensland Corrective Services agency which we can all be proud of.

Over the past eight months Queensland Corrective Services has worked closely with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General on the functions required by Queensland Corrective Services to operate as its own department. Separate, but related to, implementing the machinery-of-government changes was a review of the organisational structure of Queensland Corrective Services. This review was completed to ensure the agency's structure and resources effectively support it operating as a stand-alone department and, of course, assist with implementing its 10-year strategic plan.

Key to Commissioner Martin's vision for Queensland Corrective Services has been the appointment of three deputy commissioners. Assuming the custodial operations portfolio, Deputy

Commissioner Andrew Beck has a wide range of operational and senior executive experience in custodial and security roles in the public and private sector. He was previously a deputy commissioner in Western Australia. With a strong focus on safety, security and offender rehabilitation, he will be responsible for driving the upcoming overcrowding and infrastructure implications review and the use of force review.

Heading up the community corrections and specialist operations portfolio will be Deputy Commissioner Paul Stewart. Paul has served 36 years with the Queensland Police Service, and he has a broad range of experience in community engagement and a strong public safety background. His focus will be on organisational capacity and he will be responsible for a wide range of reviews, including the ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the *Queensland Parole System Review*.

The Deputy Commissioner of Organisational Capability, James Koulouris, comes from New South Wales Corrective Services, where he was the Assistant Commissioner for Governance and Continuous Improvement. His focus will be on people, capabilities and strategy and governance, including an organisational structure review of roles and responsibilities. The collective experiences of the commissioner and these new deputy commissioners will enable Queensland Corrective Services to meet the organisational and operational challenges ahead as Queensland Corrective Services enters an exciting new era as a standalone department.

The implementation of machinery-of-government changes, Queensland Corrective Services' structural review and 10-year strategic plan will lay a strong foundation for Queensland Corrective Services to become a world-class leader in corrective services.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Minister, page 3 of the SDS refers to the reforms to Queensland's probation and parole system arising from the Sofronoff review. One of the key recommendations was the option for GPS tracking devices to be applied to all parolees. Will the minister please outline to the committee how this initiative is progressing?

**Mr RYAN:** Our government makes no apologies for taking tough action to monitor offenders on parole. It is all about keeping the community safe. GPS trackers allow Corrective Services officers to track and monitor every movement of a parolee to ensure they comply with their parole conditions, curfews and restrictions. GPS sends an immediate alert to Queensland Corrective Services if an offender breaches certain conditions or engages in any movements that increase their risk of reoffending. The first parolee was fitted with a GPS monitoring device in February last year, and since then over 750 offenders have been fitted with these devices as the program rolls out across Queensland.

Parole Board Queensland may apply an electronic monitoring condition to an offender's parole order at the time of their release from custody. The chief executive of Queensland Corrective Services may also approve the application of electronic monitoring at any stage of a parolee's order. The GPS trackers are tamperproof. Breaking or cutting the GPS straps generates an immediate critical alert to a central monitoring station. Swift action is then taken by the authorities. The GPS tracking program is an important part of our implementation of the Sofronoff review recommendations and has two key focuses. Obviously, it is another layer of supervision and another set of 'eyes in the sky' to keep the community safe, but it also has a rehabilitative aspect to it. I will share with you a positive story.

We are receiving positive feedback from probation and parole officers about the use of GPS tracking. One story concerns an offender with a long history of substance abuse and related high-risk offending. He was subject to GPS monitoring to assist with his case management, particularly maintaining abstinence from alcohol in the early months of his release. The offender displayed compliance with every aspect of supervision and reported as directed on each occasion. Collateral checks confirmed ongoing engagement with his psychologist, and a review of his movements confirmed he was spending time at AA meetings, community service and the gym. Case management, supported by electronic monitoring, allowed the offender to maintain a pro-social routine. No contravention action occurred during the three months the offender was subject to monitoring, and he now reports to be 12 months sober and well on the way to being a positive contributor to the community.

I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the investment in technology that Queensland Corrective Services is making. Of course the GPS tracking program is a great program and it is working very well, but overlaying that with data analytics and our investment in GIS technology and programs is supporting Queensland Corrective Services in relation to how we monitor those with electronic devices and how we can manage their risks better. This is about future planning and ensuring that Queensland Corrective Services is a leader when it comes to using technology. There have been some very good initiatives shown by the agency, and I look forward to further developments in that space as we move forward.

**CHAIR:** This will be the last question in this block for government members. I ask the member for Macalister to ask the next question.

**Mrs McMAHON:** My question is for the Prostitution Licensing Authority. I refer to page 27 of the SDS which refers to the impact of unlawful prostitution, and I ask: will the minister please advise of steps being taken and planned to address illegal operators in Queensland?

**Mr RYAN:** Absolutely. I am not sure if a chair of the Prostitution Licensing Authority has ever addressed the estimates committee, so I invite the chair to the table to provide an answer.

**Judge Tutt:** Thank you, Minister. There are two forms of legal prostitution in Queensland: firstly, prostitution that occurs in licensed brothels; and, secondly, prostitution by private sex workers, commonly referred to as sole operators. Unlawful forms of prostitution include massage parlours, escort agencies and sex worker cooperatives. The PLA has no jurisdiction responsibility for prostitution outside of licensed brothels. The Queensland Police Service is responsible for investigating alleged unlawful prostitution. A QPS representative has been an active member of the authority for some time and the QPS is well aware of stakeholder concerns. The PLA encourages its stakeholders to bring any evidence of illegal prostitution activities to the attention of the QPS and if we, as an authority, receive information in that regard we, likewise, refer any matter to the QPS.

As members may be aware, the Prostitution Licensing Authority has strict guidelines in terms of lawful prostitution in terms of the licensed sector, and any applicants for a licence are very seriously and very heavily scrutinised in terms of their suitability so that the public can be assured that the Prostitution Licensing Authority is very vigilant in its duties and in ensuring that only responsible people hold a brothel licence. As I say, in terms of unlawful prostitution, that is a matter of course for the Queensland Police Service.

**Mr RYAN:** Well done. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** I ask the member for Mirani if he has a question.

**Mr ANDREW:** Yes, I have, Mr Chair. Commissioner Martin, given that the budget will address new cell blocks, which is great for the Mirani electorate that I represent, will the budget also address the issue of escaping prisoners from the Capricornia Correctional Centre and what measures have been taken to bolster security?

**Commissioner Martin:** Thank you for the question. As you would appreciate, the focus on infrastructure around Queensland—the predominance of infrastructure—is around maximum security or high-security type of correctional centres, but there is a proportion, naturally enough, of low-security centres around Queensland that perform a very valuable role in terms of integrating people back into the community. High-security facilities, by their very nature, have a high degree of infrastructure investment that prevents people from escaping and, combined with the excellent work of QCS staff, I am really proud to say that in the last 20 years there has not been an escape from a high-security centre anywhere in Queensland.

The issue of low security is a very different proposition and, naturally enough, there is an element of intelligence that determines whether or not a person is actually a fit and proper person to be availed of low security, so to the best of our ability we use our intelligence holdings. We use whatever information is available to us to make a determination, having regard for the fact whether an individual is an appropriate fit for low security. However, all of these determinations come with an element of risk. In no way do we ever compromise community safety, to the degree that we possibly can. That is our No. 1 strategy and on each and every occasion that somebody is afforded an opportunity to migrate to a low-security facility it is for very good and valid reasons and it is based on the available evidence that exists at that particular time.

Human beings are complex. Their needs and their motivations are unique to them, so an individual who has demonstrated months of good behaviour can have a brain snap and can do something really quite silly and completely out of character, bearing in mind that the notion of an escape from low security can sometimes be little more than merely walking away from the site, stepping over a fence and moving out of the site. The reason for that low-security status is that factor that I spoke about before. These are people who are transitioning out of formal prison systems and this is an intermediary step back into the community.

The works we have done at Capricornia with respect to upgrades on the fence have been costly. They have been appropriate. They have involved enhancements to technology and practice. While never being able to put your hand on your heart and say that absolutely there will never, ever be an escape from low security, I am reasonably satisfied locally that everything that reasonably could be

done has been done and that with any escapes that have occurred—bearing in mind that they occur at a numerically low rate, but one escape is one too many—on every one of those occasions when that occurs we take the lessons on board, we look at what has occurred with the event of taking those lessons and ensuring that it does not happen in the future, but I am very grateful for the question.

**Mr ANDREW:** Thank you, Commissioner.

**CHAIR:** I hand back to the deputy chair.

**Mr LISTER:** Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, thank you for your answer earlier regarding when the commissioner advised that the government declared the Mongrel Mob an identified organisation. Can you elaborate on your date of May? Can you provide the day that that advice came through or are you happy to take that on notice?

**Mr RYAN:** I have answered the question. I have given that detail to you.

**Mr LISTER:** The date was advised as May. Was there a date provided?

**Mr RYAN:** That is the advice I have received and that is the answer I give.

**CHAIR:** The question has been answered. Could you ask your next question?

**Mr LISTER:** I defer to the member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you, member. Commissioner, with the expansion of the bunk bed program, obviously there are other parts of the facility that then get put under pressure, such as the DU facilities. I am interested in understanding the management of prisoner behaviour when you have a DU facility running at 100 per cent, as happened at Brisbane Women's for eight months.

**Commissioner Martin:** That is a very important point that you make. The pressure on the system is felt not only in terms of the bed and cell time. We also mentioned programming the medical facilities and a range of other issues. You are quite right in terms of the pressure on the DU at Brisbane Women's, but the strategy we have in place for SQCC will alleviate that very significantly and right across the women's population. There is a strategy there that will give us extra compartment and extra capability with respect to DU with respect to the women prison population across Queensland, so that is incredibly important.

The point that you make is a very valuable one and it underscores the pressure on the system also around staff mess facilities, the medical facility and program facilities. The bunk bed of itself is one strategy to address one element of it, but we are also incredibly minded that in our business cases going forward we also look at the other elements of the prison itself to upgrade those facilities to cater for the increased numbers. People often do not think about what it means to provision meals, for example, in a prison designed for 300 people where you now have 500. That puts pressure on the system, so the bringing in of extra facilities—the bringing in of extra refrigerators and freezers, cooking facilities, increasing the size of the mess facilities—is the sort of thing that practically is occurring as part of the future planning, in conjunction with the expansion of the 100 bunk beds in Queensland.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you. With regard to the laundry facilities at Wacol and the age of some of the equipment there, are there any plans in the future for that particular industry sector to get some upgraded equipment?

**Commissioner Martin:** We are incredibly mindful and we certainly do not waste funds in Queensland Corrective Services, and you can see that by the performance that we bring out of the existing infrastructure, including all of the capital assets that exist within Queensland Corrective Services. We use taxpayers' funding very prodigiously. We use equipment based on reasonable and longer term schedules in terms of replacement. We maximise the life of those facilities.

When it comes to industries and particularly when it comes to the laundry equipment, this is equipment that gets an enormous amount of use. This is commercial grade equipment. We look at what is a reasonable end of useful life. We factor that in in terms of our capital investments for the future. We look at replacing those as appropriate for the future and we will repair them to keep them functional and fit for purpose, of course having regard for the safety of the prison population that uses them and also the staff. We have a schedule of replacement with respect to all of our equipment, including the laundry equipment.

**Mr RYAN:** Just to seek some clarification, you did say Wacol but—

**Mr WATTS:** Yes, and BCC.

**Mr RYAN:** BCC. There are obviously many prisons in Wacol.

**Mr WATTS:** Certainly. Minister, I have a question—

**CHAIR:** Member for Toowoomba North, I apologise for interrupting you. I just wanted to warn you that we are about six minutes out from finishing.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you, Chair. Minister, we have heard a lot about the PA unit and the fact that it is over capacity and it has a built environment end of useful life, I guess, in that it needs expansion. Can you outline for us if there are any plans to expand that facility or a similar facility in Queensland?

**Mr RYAN:** As the commissioner outlined, that facility is owned by Queensland Health, so you are best directing that question to the Minister for Health.

**Mr WATTS:** I will ask a follow-up if I may, then, Chair. Given that it is Queensland Health's facility, how do you as the minister plan for QCS to manage the health needs of prisoners, given the overcapacity that exists at the PA?

**Mr RYAN:** I will refer you to the answers the commissioner gave earlier about that particular matter.

**Mr WATTS:** So there is no plan?

**Mr RYAN:** The commissioner has outlined the plan. If you were not listening, Trevor—

**CHAIR:** Sorry, Minister, to interrupt, but the question has been answered. Ask your next question or we will move back to the government members in the limited time we have left.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, back to the PA unit, do you believe there is adequate staffing at night to keep the—

**Ms McMILLAN:** I raise a point of order.

**CHAIR:** What is your point of order?

**Ms McMILLAN:** The question is asking for an opinion.

**Mr WATTS:** Commissioner, is the staffing at the PA secure unit adequate for the night shift?

**Commissioner Martin:** My role is to use the resources that I have, that I am given by government, in the most efficacious way that I can. I use those resources having regard for my fundamental priority of keeping the community safe and keeping all of the people that I have responsibility for—the 8,850 prisoners and the 20,500 people on community corrections orders and a workforce of 5,000 people—safe, and I take that responsibility incredibly seriously.

I use those resources, having regard for the system, in the best way that I possibly can to not only get the best outcomes but also keep everybody safe. If I was to be given another 500 personnel, you could absolve 500 personnel as any government department could, but the reality is that I have what I have and I have to use it in the most prodigious way that I can. The allocation of staff that we have both in the day shifts and in the evening shift at the PAHSU is in accord with how best to allocate those resources currently. If we have increased demand above and beyond what otherwise would be expected, there are strategies in place to surge capability and to move staff and to deal with an unexpected need across the system, wherever that pressure might occur.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Commissioner. The time allocated for consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolios of Police and Corrective Services has expired. Minister, I note that there have been a number of questions taken on notice. Do you wish to answer any of those now?

**Mr RYAN:** I can provide some of those now and then, with your indulgence, I can provide a closing statement as well.

**CHAIR:** Of course, Minister.

**Mr RYAN:** I have been advised by Queensland Corrective Services that the last review of the PAHSU was in 2011. A follow-up was in 2012. There were 16 recommendations. Thirteen were resolved, with three requiring further work. The next inspection is this year, 2018-19. I have also been informed by Queensland Corrective Services that there are zero cameras installed in the industries area at Southern Queensland Correctional Centre but, as part of the commissioning from that facility from male use to female use, all consideration will be given to the fit-out and current infrastructure.

In closing, I thank the committee for its questions and the important role it plays in the parliamentary process. I also thank the parliamentary staff once again. I thank the Chair of the Prostitution Licensing Authority, Wally Tutt, and his team at the Prostitution Licensing Authority. I also thank the President of the Queensland Parole Board, Michael Byrne, and his team at Parole Board Queensland. I also want to thank Commissioner Martin and his team at Queensland Corrective

Services. I do not think a lot of people truly understand how incredibly challenging the work done within Queensland Corrective Services is—dealing with the most dangerous, the most challenging Queenslanders every single day. Because people do not truly appreciate it, a lot of that really good work that QCS does is unnoticed and often unappreciated by the wider community, but I want everyone in QCS to know that we are grateful for the work that they do and because of that work we are all safer. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Minister, answers to questions taken on notice are due to the committee secretariat by 3 pm on Monday, 30 July. I thank the minister and departmental officers for their attendance. The hearing will resume at 6 pm with the examination of estimates for the Fire and Emergency Services portfolio.

**Proceedings suspended from 5.16 pm to 6.00 pm.**

## ESTIMATES—LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE—FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

### In Attendance

Hon. CD Crawford, Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

Mr P Clarke, Chief of Staff

#### Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Ms K Carroll, Commissioner


Mr D Smith, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Strategy Officer

Mr T Dawson, Assistant Commissioner, Rural Fire Service

#### Office of Inspector-General Emergency Management

Mr I Mackenzie, Inspector-General Emergency Management

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 **CHAIR:** The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2018 for the portfolio area of the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio until 7.30 pm. The visiting member is Lachlan Millar MP, the member for Gregory. With us here today is Stephen Andrew, the member for Mirani; Jim McDonald, the member for Lockyer; Melissa McMahon, the member for Macalister; Corrine McMillan, the member for Mansfield; and James Lister, the member for Southern Downs and deputy chair. I am Peter Russo, the member for Toohey. I am the chair of the committee. I invite the minister to make an opening statement of no more than five minutes, please.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Thank you, Mr Chair. It is with great honour and pride that I sit here tonight before the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee as the Palaszczuk government's minister dedicated solely to Queensland's fire and emergency services. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding work of our fire and rescue service and our Rural Fire Service, which is gearing up for a busy fire season. I would like to recognise the State Emergency Service, the Inspector-General Emergency Management, Surf Life Saving Queensland, Volunteer Marine Rescue, the coastguard, emergency service cadets, and the public servants within QFES for their contribution to safer and resilient communities right across Queensland. Full-time, part-time, casual, auxiliary or volunteer, each person makes a difference to prepare for, to respond to, and to help communities recover from fire and emergency events. Since becoming minister, I have travelled to 53 electorates around this fine state visiting our QFES people, meeting with them, listening to them and thanking them on behalf of the Palaszczuk government for their excellent work.

Queensland is often at the mercy of extreme weather events. Time after time our highly skilled Fire and Emergency Services staff and volunteers have responded swiftly and effectively when disaster strikes. I have seen their wonderful efforts in remote communities like Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama, which I inspected with the Premier in the wake of Cyclone Nora. I have inspected flood damage in the state's north and north-west, where well-trained and well-prepared firefighter specialists as well as our dedicated SES volunteers risked their own lives undertaking rescues in unpredictable flash flooding.

I would like to make special mention of the heroic efforts of two swiftwater firefighters: Station Officer Ian Fulton and Senior Firefighter Rob Macfarlane, who helped evacuate dozens of residents in my electorate when a Redlynch caravan park was hit by a wall of water in March this year. What tremendous QFES ambassadors they really are. I was also impressed with how QFES was able to juggle its commitment of April's successful Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast while responding to cyclonic weather impacting the Queensland coastline. This government realises how crucial it is to build on this momentum as we continue moving forward.

One way of ensuring that QFES continues to be a leader in emergency service response and communication preparation is through this government's \$29 million commitment to deliver 500 new firefighting jobs in Queensland under our record \$702 million budget investment for 2018-19. Under the first round of this initiative, which honours an election commitment, 62 additional front-line firefighters will be placed across regional Queensland to ensure that these at-risk communities have the extra



resources and infrastructure they need. The allocation of these firefighting positions is determined by QFES based on operational priorities. We will continue to work with QFES Commissioner Katarina Carroll and stakeholders regarding the deployment of the remaining 38 recruits.

This government recognises that communities across Queensland are growing and we are committed to ensuring that QFES has the personnel, the infrastructure and equipment to deliver enhanced services and support. For that reason, the Queensland Volunteer Marine Rescue Committee recently identified the potential need for a review of marine rescue in Queensland. Common issues of concern identified by both the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association and Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland include an increased demand for services; rising costs for vessels; fit-out and communications equipment; competition for resources, both human and financial; increased training obligations; and increased insurance costs. Given those issues, I am of the view that there is scope for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in the Queensland marine rescue environment. Commissioner Carroll has the authority to undertake a marine rescue service review and I can confirm that she has confirmed my request to do so. This review will be completed before existing service agreements between QFES, Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland and Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association expire in June next year.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that the best possible disaster management arrangements are in place to benefit all Queenslanders. The office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management plays a pivotal role in helping to achieve this vision by providing a comprehensive range of activities and advice to ensure that disaster management arrangements in Queensland remain cutting edge. As part of this important role, I can announce that IGEM will conduct a capability review of the Mount Isa disaster district and local disaster groups in Boulia, Burke, Carpentaria, Cloncurry, Diamantina, Doomadgee, McKinlay, Mount Isa and Mornington Island.

**CHAIR:** Before going to questions, I remind everyone present that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament also apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. 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 this evening so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

For the benefit of Hansard, I ask the departmental officers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or the director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of Fire and Emergency Services open for examination. The question before the committee is:

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Thank you for your opening statement, Minister. I now call the member for Southern Downs.

**Mr LISTER:** Mr Chair, I refer the questions to the member for Gregory.

**Mr MILLAR:** Thank you. Firstly, can I say what a privilege it is to be here in front of these men and women in uniform. You do an admiral job and I express our gratitude for what you do. We cannot thank you enough. My first question is with reference to page 3 of the SDS and the minister's role of coordinating timely disaster response. I seek leave to table a *Cairns Post* article of 15 March 2018 titled 'One hell of a drenching'.

**CHAIR:** Before you go any further, do you have a copy?

**Mr MILLAR:** I have 10 copies, chair.

**CHAIR:** Is leave granted? Leave is granted. Can I also ensure that the minister and whomever else needs a copy is given a copy.

**Mr MILLAR:** Minister, why were you interstate at the Victorian Urban State Fire Brigades Championships in Bendigo while Far North Queensland communities were flooding?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Thank you for the question. During that time—and I am looking here; this is the long weekend of the 10th and 11th—I had an invitation to attend the Victorian state championships opening ceremony at Bendigo, which was on the Saturday morning at 9 am. That had been a longstanding commitment. Bear in mind that this was a very busy couple of months that led into this. We began with various storms and issues in Queensland probably six to eight weeks prior to this. In

the lead-up to the events that were occurring in Queensland I made a decision that, after I attended the QDMC meeting, which was late in the afternoon of the Friday of that weekend, I would travel to Melbourne to be able to attend that opening ceremony with the ability to be able to return to Queensland immediately. Throughout that night I was kept briefed by my department in relation to what was happening, particularly at Ingham. We were monitoring very high floodwaters at Ingham that night and I was prepared to come back to Brisbane the first thing the next morning if I needed to do so.

**Mr MILLAR:** Surely, people in Far North Queensland—

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Mr Chair, I am still answering the question.

**CHAIR:** Member for Gregory, allow the minister to complete his answer before you go on to the next question.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** First thing next morning the update that I obtained at around about sunrise was that the Ingham floodwaters were not reaching the level that they were predicted to go to and that, in fact, they were starting to recede. The decision was made through a hook-up of directors-general that the QDMC would not be meeting again that day and I made the decision to monitor events from where I was. Throughout that day, I spent most of the time on the phone getting updates and updating individual people. I think I might have even rung you to provide an update on what was happening.

This was a very busy time across Queensland. It did not stop just with this weekend; it continued to go on for a long time and Queensland is a very big state. Whether you are asking me in my capacity as Fire and Emergency Services minister whether I should have been in Cairns that day, or Brisbane that day, or, as local member, whether I should have been there, it is very difficult to predict where I should be in what capacity. I have a very good department, a very good commissioner and a very good team of people who do what they do. I think my location is irrelevant in this situation. The most important thing is that I was where I needed to be when the Premier had the QDMC.

**Mr MILLAR:** Surely, the people of Far North Queensland would expect the emergency services minister and also the local member to be coordinating the response in their time of need in Far North Queensland rather than being interstate.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Thank you for the question. Had the issue in Ingham at that point continued to get worse, my required location would have been at Kedron as part of the QDMC, as part of the stand-up committee at the SDCC. I would not have been in Far North Queensland.

**Mr MILLAR:** But you would have been closer than Bendigo.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Point of order. I believe that the minister has answered the question.

**Mr MILLAR:** I will move on. My question is to the minister with reference to page 4 of the SDS under the heading '2018-19 service area highlights', which discusses the service's role in supporting the implementation of the changes to smoke alarm laws. This morning on ABC Sunshine Coast radio smoke detector advocate, Keith Golinski, whose son, Matt Golinski, escaped the fire but lost his wife and children, raised issues of smoke detectors filling up with insects and being unable to be cleaned as it would void the warranty. Has the government fielded any concerns like this? If so, what assurances have you had from manufacturers that their products will hold up or be replaced?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** I thank the member for the question. As you would remember, in the last term of parliament we implemented laws in Queensland that were passed by this House—and I think, member for Gregory, you voted in favour of them—

**Mr MILLAR:** Absolutely, yes.

**Mr CRAWFORD:**—to introduce a 10-year staged implementation of photoelectric smoke alarms. I would have to say that I think Queensland is certainly leading the nation when it comes to smoke alarm legislation.

In respect to the statement that you make about insects in smoke alarms, that is the first that I have heard of that. That is the first time that we have been made aware of anything such as that. That to me certainly sounds like a manufacturing issue, not an issue in relation to this department or certainly to the legislation about smoke detectors.

**Mr MILLAR:** Just to follow up, it is a concern of the department because these photoelectric smoke detectors which we are implementing in further legislation—

**CHAIR:** Do you have a question?

**Mr MILLAR:** You say you are not aware. Can you outline the government's testing and research that has been undertaken to ensure users' long-term expectations, in particular what has been

undertaken to ensure the quality of the warranties, better supply quality and resilience to Queensland conditions? What has the department done with the manufacturers on that issue?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** The photoelectric smoke alarms have to comply with Australian Standard 37862014. It is through Australian Standards that they determine the standard for a smoke alarm, the construction, how it operates and how it functions. That is not a matter for this department.

**Mr MILLAR:** We have legislation which is requiring photoelectric smoke alarms to be placed in houses and also public premises. Surely the department has a responsibility to make sure that the photoelectric smoke alarms that we are putting in those houses do stack up, they do have a longevity in those houses and they are being put in and it is working. Surely the department has some sort of accountability on that.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** I will refer back to my previous answer, which is that smoke alarms have to be constructed to an Australian Standard. That Australian Standard that I just mentioned is what they have to be constructed to. The legislation that this department introduced was about making sure that photoelectric smoke alarms are implemented to houses in Queensland over the next 10 years. I have to say that these are by far the best standards that you can get in relation to smoke alarms. We will see by 1 January 2027 that every single house, every dwelling in Queensland, will have a photoelectric smoke alarm in their bedroom. They will also have it in interconnecting hallways that run between and they will have them on every level. The whole lot of them will be interconnected, which means when one goes off they will all go off. These will save lives. I take your point about insects getting into them. That is something that has not been brought to our attention.

**Mr MILLAR:** Following on from that, with what Keith Golinski has said and what was said on ABC Radio, there is possibly another pink batt situation here where we have smoke alarms that are faulty and will not make the distance.

**CHAIR:** Member for Gregory, do you have a question?

**Mr MILLAR:** That is it: they will not make the distance. There is a real concern out there.

**CHAIR:** That is a statement.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Point of order. It was a statement. I think it is time to move on, Mr Chair.

**Mr MILLAR:** I will move on, Chair. I refer to page 11 of the SDS under 'Staffing'. There are only 135 female firefighters in Queensland, representing just under six per cent of all firefighters in the state. Two out of 18 senior executive positions in the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services are female. In 2017 only six female firefighters were added to the ranks, a 55 per cent reduction from the previous year. Can the minister explain why these numbers of female firefighters fall short of the government's own standard and why we have seen such a significant reduction?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Thank you very much for the question. This is something that I have great enjoyment talking about and I think it is a good question. When I first became minister, back in December 2017, and I attended a graduation ceremony only a few days thereafter, I noticed that the number of female recruit firefighters graduating that day was very low. There were I think two or three out of a cohort of some 30-odd.

Following that, I had lengthy conversations with the commissioner and also the senior executive of QFES about strategies in order to encourage more female firefighters into our fire and rescue ranks. We are talking just about fire and rescue at this stage, because across other parts of the agency we actually have very good numbers. The percentages across the State Emergency Service volunteers and the Rural Fire Service volunteers are actually very healthy. Even amongst our auxiliary we have a high rate.

It has certainly been identified that one of the things making it hard for women applicants to get in as a firefighter has been the physical test. We have isolated that there have been some areas around that physical test which has made it difficult. We are not proposing to change the physical test at all. I want to make that very, very clear. I am also not proposing to introduce a mandate on numbers or anything like that. What we do want to do as a department is work on strategies to increase numbers. We have recognised that if we had more applicants applying for a job with QFES that would ultimately lead to higher intake rates.

A lot of work has been done by the department on isolating the opportunities with respect to advertising and promotion around attracting more women applicants. In addition to that there have been some changes made around the testing regime, one of those being that all applicants for firefighting roles will get a second go at the physical test. Previously that has not been the case. Previously you

would turn up and do the physical test and if you failed then that was it. You would go. That has now been changed. All applicants, male and female, will get a second go. We all know what it is like to go and do a test. You are a bit nervous and you are unsure of how things go. Everyone can come back and have a second go. I have to say that our physical test to be a firefighter is fairly high, and we make no excuses about that, because the role of firefighter does require quite a bit of physical dexterity.

One of the other things we have done around the sides of that is a bit of consultation around our department. When the physical test is happening we want to make sure that we create an environment where female applicants do not feel in any way, shape or form pressured, intimidated or the like. We are doing some work to make sure that we have some female assessors and female instructors there as well. Thirdly, we are doing some work so that female applicants who are coming up towards that test can do some practice runs so they can know what it is they have to do on that particular day. We have done some partnering with gymnasiums and the like so that they know what it is they have to do on the day. In no way, shape or form does this make it easier for anybody, but it properly prepares people for that to happen.

The other point I will make around that is that Fire and Rescue has near the lowest attrition rate of nearly any organisation probably in this state. Between one and two per cent of our career firefighters leave every year. That means that changing the percentages, like you stated in your question, can actually take quite a long time. If you cast aside for a second the 100 firefighters that we are putting on as a boost, the change is only around 25 or 30 firefighters every year. Even making those 100 per cent female cohorts still will take a number of years to bring the numbers up. It is not something that we are proposing to do in any sort of drastic means like that, but we do want to make it fairer for female applicants. We want to lift the numbers, but we want to do that in a fair way so that it does not also offend our hardworking women firefighters who are out there right now, some of them probably on trucks as we speak, who gave it their all to get into this job.

**Mr MILLAR:** We saw in the 2014 Allison review that there was a significant issue within the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services around its culture as a hostile and toxic workplace for women. Can the minister outline how many of the 259 actioned bullying and sexual harassment cases involved females?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Thank you for the question. I will have to take that one on notice because that is rather a specific number that you are after. I can give you some statistics that are near what you are looking for, but that precise question we will have to take on notice. QFES did some research amongst its workforce. A lot of that was as a result of the Allison review that you mentioned. In 2015, 61 per cent of staff had not witnessed sexual harassment or bullying and 76 per cent of staff said that they had not been subjected to sexual harassment or bullying. In 2016, 73 per cent of staff said that they had not witnessed it and 81 per cent said that they had not been subjected to it. In 2017, 76 per cent said that they had not witnessed it and 84 per cent said that they were not subjected to it.

If you look back on those numbers you will see that the trend over the last three years is that fewer staff are indicating that they have been subjected to sexual harassment or bullying and more staff are indicating that they have not seen it. Those numbers indicate that the culture is changing, and that certainly had to happen. There was absolutely no doubt that the events that led to the Allison review required some action. Obviously that is what the Allison review was about. Mr Chair, I will take on notice that specific question about those statistics that the member wants.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

**Mr MILLAR:** Will that come back at the end of the session or do you need more time?

**CHAIR:** The minister said that he will take it on notice.

**Mr MILLAR:** But will it come back at the end of the session?

**CHAIR:** It may or it may not. He said that he would take it on notice.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** I am happy to answer. The commissioner has advised me that we will not have those numbers tonight. That will take quite a bit of time.

**Mr MILLAR:** That is fine. I understand. I wanted to get clarification on that.

**CHAIR:** It will be available by 30 July at 3 pm. I ask the member for Mansfield to ask the next question.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Thank you, Chair. Page 3 of the SDS describes the department's key priorities in the area of response activities. Can you outline the functions of our Disaster Assistance Response Team?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** I thank the member for Mansfield for the question. The Queensland Disaster Assistance Response Team, also known as DART, is a multiagency, multidisciplinary team made up of full-time and volunteer members. It includes firefighters, paramedics, doctors, engineers, hazmat specialists, police K9 handlers and communications operators.

The DART has its cornerstone in the technical rescue disciplines of urban search and rescue, also known as USAR, swiftwater rescue, vertical rescue, confined space rescue and trench rescue. The DART is flexible and agile through design and can deploy in multiple formats, in teams ranging in size from two to 75, to effectively deploy to wideranging emergency events including things such as swiftwater rescue, cyclone and severe weather events, damage assessments and reporting in the immediate aftermath of major events, building collapse and urban search and rescue as a result of structural collapse, earthquakes and even severe fire damage in premises. They also conduct recognisance and coordination as well as hazardous materials assessment. Qualified DART personnel are located across the state and deployed locally within regions as needed or as groups from the state deployment centre here at Morningside.

As of 30 June 2018 there were 245 trained USAR technicians and 399 trained swiftwater rescue technicians and operators in QFES providing a substantial response capability for large-scale events and disasters in Queensland. An example of the Queensland DART capabilities is the DART's deployment throughout the 2017-18 financial year following TC Iris, TC Nora and other severe weather events completing 2,017 damage assessments across Queensland.

The DARTs also are deployable both nationally and internationally and hold the United Nations classification as a Heavy USAR Team under the guidelines of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, INSARAG. Only Queensland and New South Wales hold that status.

International deployments are funded through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which also provides funding support for DART teams to maintain readiness for international deployment and engagement with the United Nations and INSARAG to maintain high levels. Our DART team is approaching our five yearly reclassification exercise. I understand that is happening in August of this year. That will mark 10 years since our team attained the international classification. They have deployed 136 times in support of state and national emergencies and disasters since 1 January 2011. They have also deployed in support of international events on six occasions, including a full Heavy USAR Team deployment to the Christchurch earthquake in February 2011. These deployments have resulted in 1,288 personnel being mobilised as team members in support of major domestic disasters and incidents from January 2011 to June 2018. A further 97 personnel have been mobilised in support of international disasters. It is an amazing job that they do.

**CHAIR:** Minister, I refer you to page 3 of the SDS, where it states that a key priority of the department is reviewing the current service delivery model to ensure it meets contemporary needs. Could the minister please explain how QFES is looking to position itself to meet the contemporary needs of the community?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** In order to meet its obligations under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 and the Disaster Management Act 2003, QFES is undertaking a review to ensure its three separate response services, being the Fire and Rescue Service, the State Emergency Service and the Rural Fire Service, as well as our emergency management capability, are meeting statutory obligations and the needs and expectations of the Queensland community. I want to be very clear that there will be no job losses in respect to what we are talking about here. Instead, there will be a realignment of resources into regions, increasing the presence within local communities and simplifying management. The move to a place based approach to our business will benefit the individual services, being the Fire and Rescue Service, the Rural Fire Service and the SES, as well as our emergency management capability, through increased access to training and realising economies of scale in the management of fleet, equipment and capital works on a statewide basis.

QFES is a diverse organisation with over 2,000 points of presence across Queensland, providing services not only to the community but also by the community. In order for QFES to modernise and become a 21st century organisation, we will be fully engaging with both our paid and our volunteer staff, critical mission partners, stakeholders and the community before any discussions are made on QFES's future capability, funding and structure. Engagement and consultation will occur over the coming months, with an implementation to occur in stages and completed by 2020. In addition, any future direction will be driven through guidance by an expert panel of leaders in the fields of command and control, operational coordination, cultural transformation, modern public service practice, financial sustainability and leadership development.

It is essential that QFES improves place based coordination to ensure consistency with the Queensland government's goal of being a more responsible government service and the department's vision of creating safe and resilient communities. The move to such an approach links to the Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities plan. For QFES to operate as a contemporary department, it is essential that it continues to evolve and mature. QFES is focused on optimising interoperability capability, reducing duplication, enhanced value for investment across all services and ensuring continuous improvement for both business as usual as well as our operations to enable decision-making to occur locally within our communities, rather than just from a state level.

**Mrs McMAHON:** Minister, page 21 of the SDS, relating to the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, refers to conducting a capability review of a disaster district, including the district and local disaster management groups, in 2018-19. Can the minister advise which disaster district will be reviewed next?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** The Palaszczuk government is committed to planning to keep its communities safe. The role of the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, IGEM, is to work with entities involved in disaster and emergency management to improve capabilities, operational effectiveness and outcomes for all Queenslanders. As part of this role, IGEM conducts capability reviews of disaster management groups in a single disaster district, measured against the standard for disaster management in Queensland. The standard was established in 2014 and provides comprehensive performance outcomes for entities involved in disaster management.

In 2016, IGEM conducted a review of the Mackay Disaster District, including the local government areas of Isaac, Mackay and Whitsunday. A capability review of the Townsville Disaster District was undertaken between July 2017 and February 2018. IGEM worked closely with the Burdekin, Charters Towers, Flinders, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island, Richmond and Townsville local disaster management groups and the Townsville District Disaster Management Group to assess their capability to meet future practices and challenges. The review report was publicly released in April of this year and found that there was a highly effective disaster management capability across the Townsville Disaster District.

The achievements of the Townsville Disaster District reflect the leadership, disaster management expertise and commitment of the seven local governments, their local disaster management groups and the district disaster management group. In February this year, the capability of the Townsville Disaster District and its local arrangements were tested by severe weather and flooding events. The strengths identified during the review were evident during that operational response and contributed to effective community outcomes.

The Office of IGEM will next conduct a capability review of the Mount Isa Disaster District and its local disaster management groups. The office will work closely with the local disaster management groups of the shires of Boulia, Burke, Carpentaria, Cloncurry, Diamantina, Doomadgee, McKinlay and Mornington, including Mornington Island, the City of Mount Isa and the Mount Isa District Disaster Management Group. We expect to commence that in November this year and complete it sometime after the next wet season.

**CHAIR:** Before we go to the next question, I welcome Sandy Bolton, the member for Noosa, to the committee. I ask the member for Mansfield to ask the next question, please.

**Ms McMILLAN:** Page 10 references the department's capital program. What will the budget mean in regards to new and replacement vehicles and equipment for our Fire and Rescue Service, the Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** As part of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to frontline service delivery, \$44.3 million has been provided for the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service's operational fleet capital purchases in 2018-19. That \$44.3 million comprises \$29 million for QFES fire and rescue appliances and \$15.3 million for QFES rural appliances. 2018-19 includes the second year of the accelerated Rural Fire Service Fleet Program that was announced in last year's budget. The 2018-19 capital replacement program will deliver 61 new fire and rescue replacement appliances and 119 new rural fire replacement appliances. All new QFES and rural fire appliances are supplied with a standard list of operational ancillary equipment and timber cribbage. Speciality equipment supplied from this budget for new appliances varies by operational requirements, but may include road crash rescue tools and thermal imaging cameras.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Rural Fire Services support the Queensland vehicle body building industry with all appliances currently being built by Queensland based companies. The 2018-19 Rural Fire Service appliance build program has already started with the purchase of 20 cab chassis in an initial build. In addition, from July 2018 all new Rural Fire Service vehicles will have

an automated external defibrillator or AED installed. The AEDs are a vital piece of first-aid equipment for brigades, which are often the first responders at incidents in rural and regional areas. The device will greatly enhance the safety of not only QFES staff and volunteers but also members of the public. This is yet another example of how QFES prioritises the safety of its workforce and the community it services. The 2018-19 QFES urban build program will deliver 55 replacement operational pumper tanker appliances and six specialty appliances. An additional operational fire appliance in support of the upgrade of the rural fire station at Logan Village, to service the community of Yarrabilba and surrounds, will be delivered from this budget.

QFES holds a capital budget of \$6.6 million, including \$4 million for operational equipment, which may include protective clothing such as fully encapsulated gas suits and equipment to service them, specialist and field portable scientific analysis and detection equipment and compressors for self-contained breathing apparatus. Equipment purchases may also include motorised swift water rescue craft, battery powered rescue equipment, accommodation shelters and satellite communication hardware for deployable disaster response.

**Mr ANDREW:** I would like to say thank you to both the fire service and the rural fire service for all their support and hard work in Mount Morgan. It has been shocking over the past month and I thank you very much. That is unneeded, but you are staying up to the task. I wish to question Commissioner Carroll. I have been talking to the rural fire brigades, such as at Alton Downs. They have been doing assessments. Will the current budget allow for some of those assessments to be carried through? Minister Crawford talked about the new appliances coming into the regions. Are any allocated for the Mirani electorate?

**Commissioner Carroll:** Can I clarify the question, when you asked for assessments?

**Mr ANDREW:** It has been brought to my attention that the rural fire brigades make an assessment of their brigade area, which dictates whether there is a need for extra appliances. It has come to my attention that it has been shown that there is a need for that. Under the new budget, with new appliances being put into the regions, will places such as Alton Downs and other smaller rural fire brigades get those new appliances?

**Commissioner Carroll:** As you know, we have been rolling out more equipment and more fire appliances than ever before. The assessments are done locally, but also strategically; not only at the local level but also at our state level. Between the two, we will determine what appliances are required and roll them out. Some may just need maintenance done on current appliances and others may need new appliances. Some may need just one appliance and others may need two appliances. Assessments are being made in a range of ways. Certainly if a brigade does have an issue in terms of their equipment, they are very welcome to brief up into the organisation, so that we can look at that. You can see from what has already been stated that we are in massive growth in terms of the appliances that we are pushing out over a two-year period. I think there were 119 rural appliances just in the year 2018-19. The accelerated growth has been substantial for two years. If the brigades have an issue, please push that up—certainly it is accelerated growth—and we can look at that.

**Mr ANDREW:** Thank you, Commissioner.

**Ms BOLTON:** Minister, there might be a couple of areas that are not within this realm, however, I do consider them emergency services. With regards the coastguard, surf lifesaving, the SES and, of course, the rural fire and other volunteer emergency services, what new models are being investigated to fund those essential live-saving and emergency service organisations? Within other states, licensing and registration levies and potential call-out fees are just some examples where the financial duress these organisations face can be addressed.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** The question is in line with some of what I was talking about in my opening remarks. I will break it down a bit. There are a number of organisations that QFES has service-level agreements with. I will break your question into a couple of segments, if I may. Certainly in the areas around marine rescue, that is, the Australian Volunteer Coastguard Association and Marine Rescue Queensland, as well as Royal Life Saving and Surf Live Saving Queensland, they are met by a service-level agreement. Every three years the department will negotiate with them for a sum of money and we provide that money on a three-year rolling basis. Then we negotiate into that.

How those respective organisations manage their funds is purely up to them. We do not dictate to them what they use where. That then enables those organisations to do a lot of fundraising and be quite prominent in their communities. You have seen how successful Surf Life Saving Queensland are in terms of the way they conduct themselves in the community.

The State Emergency Service and the Rural Fire Service are under the complete control of the department. In recent years there has been a lot of work done to reduce the amount of work they have to do in addition to their operational commitments so that they can use their time to train and respond as opposed to spend a lot of time fundraising. A classic example of that was when the department took over the maintenance of the Rural Fire Service fleet. Up until a year or two ago, all rural fire brigades across the state had to fund their petrol and diesel and the maintenance of their trucks. They had to shake the tin. They had to try to get grants and various things to do that. Now that is centrally controlled out of QFES. It is the same arrangement for a pumper in the city and a tanker out in the bush.

It is all about trying to make sure that our volunteers do not have to spend a lot of time undertaking fundraising work. I did 20 years as a volunteer firefighter so I know exactly what I am talking about here. We had to spend a lot of time fundraising for various bits and pieces. It is fine to fundraise for the cool things out the back of the station, like barbecues and things like that, but it leaves a bit of a sour taste in your mouth when you have to fundraise for core lifesaving equipment like primary response vehicles and things like that.

Some work is being undertaken by the department at the moment in respect of how that whole funding regime works. We collect an emergency management levy across Queensland. A number of councils collect a Rural Fire Service levy. The Rural Fire Service levy is then distributed by the councils directly to their fire brigades. The EML comes to the state and is then distributed by the state.

We are in the early stages of reviewing the emergency management levy and how all of our levies work across the state so that we can try to make it fairer for everyone—not only the community but also all of our volunteers and staff. We want to make sure that we get it right and people pay what they need to pay but also that our volunteers at the pointy end do not have to spend as much time shaking the tin down the street.

**Ms BOLTON:** I appreciate you have been speaking about fire services, but on the coast we have the coastguard and Surf Life Saving. They are literally having to fundraise for 75 per cent of their operational expenses. This is a critical situation that they are faced with. They are having to pay not only a membership to volunteer but also buy their own uniforms. Moving forward, are we going to be addressing what I find is an embarrassing situation? When you do the calculations in terms of what they are delivering in exchange for what we are giving them, it is really not sufficient.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** This morning I announced, as I did in this evening's opening statement, that we are conducting a review into the funding arrangements and operation of the coastguard and VMR in Queensland. In all there are 47 coastguard and VMR flotillas or squadrons, depending on which group you are referring to—they are the same thing—up and down the coast of Queensland. There are around 5,000 to 6,000 volunteers in that space.

There is a lot of money tied up in those. Anyone who has a boat knows that they are a complete money pit. They are no different. We have squadrons and flotillas out there that are managing millions of dollars worth of assets. Every time they come out of the water it costs a lot of money to do maintenance, let alone to keep them up to speed in respect of the latest technology, electronics and the like—forward-looking infrared and things like that.

Since becoming minister I have travelled to around nine different flotillas and squadrons in Queensland. At every spot that I drop into up and down the coast I try to make contact with them and have a look at their squadron or flotilla and have a conversation with them. There is a consistent message coming out of all of them. That is the reason we went down the road of saying that we need a review. The message is that the amount of funding that they get from government hardly touches the edge of what they are actually outlaying. A lot of them have to buy their own uniforms. They are not supplied to them as uniforms are in organisations like the SES and the like. A lot of them have to fork out money from their own pockets for a lot of things.

Some of the organisations have a really good income stream. They may have a good body of boat owners who live in their area. If the economy in the local area is good and there are lots of boat owners then they can generate good revenue. There are others that are not as fortunate—that is, their economy is under pressure—and there is not the number of boat owners who will pay a membership. Membership of one of the marine rescue organisations is not compulsory. It costs anywhere between \$80 and \$100, depending on which one you join. That covers you if you are out in the bluewater environment and you run out of fuel or your engine will not start or you capsize.

That is an area that we are very keen to look into. We will be looking into that quite strongly over the next six months. New South Wales did a review a number of years ago. They had three different marine rescue organisations in the bluewater environment. They were facing exactly the same



challenges. They did a review in 2007, I think, and brought in some significant changes. Victoria did a parliamentary committee review in 2014. They identified nearly identical problems.

The takeaway point is that the bluewater environment is an area of emergency services—I think they are an emergency service in terms of the work they do; let us be clear on that—that governments have not really looked at much before. They have been out there doing their thing. They have been doing an amazing job. They have done thousands of hours of monitoring radios and going out in the middle of the night and pulling people out of the water in often terrible conditions and getting paid nothing for it. Locally they have had good recognition, but they certainly do not have anywhere near the recognition of the Fire and Emergency Services, the State Emergency Service and Surf Life Saving Queensland. The work they do is brilliant.

Whilst it is a bit hard for me to get a grip on the exact numbers, from what I can put together there are between 5,000 and 6,000 volunteers. We have 5,500 State Emergency Service volunteers. When you add up all of our marine rescue squadrons and flotillas, they are the same size as the State Emergency Service. We need to do a lot of work there.

**Mr MILLAR:** My next question is to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services commissioner. Page 3 of the SDS outlines the department's responsibility to respond in a timely manner and appropriately to emergencies. Can you outline the number of code 1 medical call-outs that resulted in fire and rescue crews either arriving before or in place of the more appropriate provider, the Queensland Ambulance Service?

**Commissioner Carroll:** I would have to take that question on notice. Whilst we would have assisted in some cases, I could not give you those numbers this evening. We would have to check through our systems. We can certainly get back to you with an answer to that exact question.

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

**Mr CRAWFORD:** We are happy to take that on notice. That is going to take quite a bit of work to dig through.

**Commissioner Carroll:** Whilst I could go through structural fires and a heap of other things that we have in our system, that particularly question I would have to take on notice.

**Mr MILLAR:** I will ask a more general question. Does it happen? Do we see code 1 medical call-outs for the Fire and Emergency Services and not the Ambulance Service?

**Commissioner Carroll:** It is not within our remit. It is within that of the Ambulance Service. We certainly do assist when required because we have defibrillators on our trucks. If we are the first responder we will obviously assist in that regard. We do not get the actual jobs because that is the role of the Ambulance Service.

**Mr MILLAR:** Why is it that you are the first responder, rather than the Ambulance Service?

**Commissioner Carroll:** It really depends on who turns up first. Sometimes it might be the police who turn up first, other times it might be Fire and Emergency Services and other times it might be the Ambulance Service. If we were first there we would definitely do everything we could. The work normally sits within the realm of the Queensland Ambulance Service.

**Mr MILLAR:** Is Queensland Fire and Emergency Services equipped to deal with a code 1 medical emergency, possibly a cardiac arrest?

**Commissioner Carroll:** Certainly. We have basic training in CPR to respond to that. It is definitely not to the standard of the Queensland Ambulance Service officers who are experienced paramedics. I would say the standard requirements would be met but not the comprehensive standard required of ambulance officers.

**Mr MILLAR:** There is a risk with not having the Ambulance Service there first?

**Commissioner Carroll:** I am not a professional in this area, but we know the longer the period the more the risk; hence, we have defibrillators on all of our fire and rescue trucks to ensure that if we are there first we can use them to assist a patient.

**Mr MILLAR:** Commissioner, I refer to page 4 of SDS under the 2018-19 service area highlights and the revelations that South-East Queensland's SES crews and trucks will be fitted with digital radios. When South-East Queensland crews travel up north or out west to assist with the inevitable natural disasters, will they still be able to communicate via radio with other regional emergency services? Will the safety of the South-East Queensland SES crews be placed in jeopardy due to the different radio technologies?

**Commissioner Carroll:** It is a digital technology. You would know that it operates in the south-east corner for the SES, the Rural Fire Service and the Police Service. There are differing technologies across the great breadth of our state. That would not be the case. We have many systems and radios. It does not matter where we deploy; they can be utilised locally or others taken.

We do have a cache of GWN radios. In the case of Cyclone Debbie we took that cache with us and it was utilised in that area. The GWN was effectively used in the response to Cyclone Debbie. We took a cache of radios and also took what is known as the COW, the cell on wheels. You can set up one at the northern part of a disaster area and one at the southern part. You can actually communicate like we would now. In the past we would not be able to do that in a disaster area.

**Mr MILLAR:** I work on a UHF, not on a digital radio. There is an easy way to communicate, as you mentioned, but can you provide an assurance that these truck crews will be able to communicate with other emergency service crews not on the digital network?

**Commissioner Carroll:** Yes, they can.

**Mr MILLAR:** That is with the new technology?

**Commissioner Carroll:** Yes.

**Mrs McMAHON:** Minister, page 21 of the SDS refers to the Office of the IGEM progressing research and collaborative opportunities between local disaster management practitioners and universities during the 2018-19 period. Can you provide further details about these opportunities?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Our government is committed to the plan to keep communities safe and be a responsive government. The Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management, IGEM, has initiated a research framework specifically for the Queensland context to support local practitioners with data and information to make better evidence based decisions. The framework includes a database of more than 130 researchers who are available to be matched against specific local research needs across the state.

Current research projects involving IGEM which have the potential to benefit all Queenslanders include: an audit benchmark literature review and needs analysis of practitioners across Queensland regarding the data and information they need to make evidence based decisions at a local level—Griffith University has been commissioned to undertake this work; a practical proof-of-concept investigation and live exercise regarding the potential use of augmented and virtual reality in a disaster scenario using Queensland University of Technology's Garden Point campus—a second aligned study is currently being scoped involving the potential use of augmented and virtual reality regarding evacuation from aged-care facilities across Queensland; and a study and literature review through the Queensland University of Technology and the University of Southern Queensland to identify good practice for local practitioners regarding disaster management community engagement, the development of an associated toolkit for local use in community engagement and creation of an index to allow practitioners to map the extent of preparedness in specific local communities. The Office of IGEM also has a memorandum of understanding in place with QUT to offer a 10-week internship to one graduate student annually. Three students have undertaken the internship with the office so far, working on projects identified by disaster management stakeholders.

**CHAIR:** I refer to page 4 of the SDS and the department's work to continue to enhance volunteer operational capability. Could the minister please outline the PCYC's Emergency Services Cadets Program and what contribution the department is making to develop our future responders?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** To anyone who does not know anything about the Emergency Services Cadets Program, I say get on board because this is fantastic. The Emergency Services Cadets Program engages young people from 12 to 17 years old who volunteer their time to learn emergency response and life skills to build resilience, interact with community mentors and emergency services personnel and develop leadership skills. The Queensland government has made a commitment to continue funding in full the Emergency Services Cadets Program and help build the next generation of Fire and Emergency Services personnel and community volunteers.

On 1 July this year QFES entered a new three-year service agreement with the PCYC Queensland. This service agreement represents the greatest level of funding to the Emergency Services Cadets Program since its inception in 2014 and demonstrates that our government's commitment to growing this program. Through this agreement, over the next three years \$1.8 million will be provided to contribute to the significant expansion of the Emergency Services Cadets Program. Government has funded this program from day one, and the latest investment takes the total spend to more than \$3.175 million since 2014. The latest injection will significantly boost the number of

Emergency Services Cadets units from 14 to 25 statewide including increased support from QFES at the local level both before, during and after a unit is established. There will be a focus on units that are the most in need and on increased governance, plus the delivery of accredited training over the next three years.

The Emergency Services Cadets Program is currently made up of more than 600 adult leaders and cadets. I am confident this number will continue to grow thanks to the financial backing of the Queensland government. The program instils in young people a passion for volunteering, provides practical training and may act as a springboard for those who want to pursue a career in Fire and Emergency Services or continue to volunteer in their community. It is important we harness the opportunity to build on this and encourage more people to join the program. Doing so will benefit cadets, their local community and in the long term help create a valuable pool of fire and emergency service volunteers and staff.

As a young fellow in school, I was an Army cadet. I have to say that the time that I had being involved in that organisation really opened my eyes to the world around me and the opportunities that you get as a young person. This is why we run Emergency Services Cadets. I was at Townsville a weekend or two ago for the North Queensland Cadet Games. I saw our cadets up against the Army, Surf Life Saving, Navy and Air Force cadets. It is a really healthy environment that they are in. I congratulate them and wish them the best.

**Ms McMILLAN:** I refer to page 4 of the SDS which highlights improving community safety awareness and preparation activities. How does QFES prepare our communities in the event of storms and cyclones?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is responsible for the Disaster Management Act 2003 and the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990. QFES is committed to working closely with stakeholders and local district management groups to deliver capabilities to help Queensland communities prevent, prepare, respond and recover from the impacts of both storms and cyclone events.

In the lead-up to storm and cyclone season an operational period is declared by the QFES commissioner. In 2017-18 this was known as Operation Gardier and had a clear focus on a unified, multi-agency approach to planning, preparing communities and delivering rapid mobilisation and response to severe weather incidents. QFES facilitates a number of activities focused on storm and cyclone preparation and mitigation to connect with and inform the community and disaster management stakeholders. An annual preseason briefing is conducted in conjunction with EMA—Emergency Management Australia—the Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia and the Defence Force. The briefing is aimed at disaster management stakeholders and provides an update on national and state specific activities over the previous 12 months and includes the bureau's national seasonal outlook and contextual advice on the Queensland forecast. This year's briefing will be occurring on 17 September.

The QFES Get Ready Guide also provides information to Queenslanders about how to prepare for their local risk. The guide supports the Queensland government's Get Ready Queensland initiative and is a widely requested resource, with 48,800 copies distributed to Queensland communities by QFES front-line staff and volunteers between July 2017 and 30 June 2018.

This year, Mr Chair, on 15 September prepare to have your doorknocked. It is not going to be a by-election; it is going to be QFES in an operation called Operation Knock Knock. QFES will be working with emergency service stakeholders and partners to deliver Operation Knock Knock—a major community engagement exercise that will provide the opportunity for emergency service volunteers, along with personnel from QFES and our emergency service partners, to connect with the local community. They will deliver awareness and disaster preparedness education to the households, build community connections and resilience, and provide the community a chance to recognise many of the emergency services personnel who support severe weather events and volunteers. It will also assist in ensuring that our emergency service partners and local government can deliver consistent community resilience messaging.

Operation Knock Knock will be undertaken by Surf Life Saving Queensland, Volunteer Marine Rescue, the Queensland Police Service and the Red Cross. It will be supported by local partner agencies—the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and the LGAQ. Storm and cyclone preparation messaging will be delivered through the QFES seasonal media program and through the State Emergency Service principal partner NRMA Insurance, a significant in-kind investment in seasonal promotions. As I say, Mr Chair, they are not going to be selling you anything. They just want to be able to tell you what you need to do in the upcoming storm season.

**Mrs McMAHON:** Minister, page 4 talks about improving community safety awareness. What is QFES doing in the area of building fire safety?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** QFES is engaged in building fire safety from the design to the demolition of buildings throughout Queensland. QFES plays a number of vital rolls in providing increased fire safety for not only the community who lives, works or visits these buildings but also our firefighters who may respond to emergency incidents as they occur.

Through the QFES external website, a variety of fire safety information is available targeting home owners, commercial building developers and owners, as well as general fire safety advice to better inform the community. A referral advice agency and QFES building approval officers, or BAOs, provide input to ensure that vital life safety features are incorporated into the design and construction of new or upgraded buildings in all areas across the state. Inspections are carried out prior to the occupation of buildings to verify compatibility with QFES operational requirements.

In response to the increasing use of performance based building solutions rather than code based compliance in the design of new buildings, QFES employs fire engineering professionals to appraise the proposed engineering building designs, providing advice to the building approvals officers to maintain the quality of QFES advice and input. Once the building is occupied, the obligations to maintain this level of building and fire safety are placed upon the occupier of the building under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 and the Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008. QFES is the primary regulator of both of those legislative obligations.

To ensure compliance with these obligations, QFES takes a multi-tiered approach that ranges from education through to the provision of information through to action in the Supreme Court to restrict or prohibit the use of a building. Across Queensland every day operational fire crews conduct maintenance inspection to review fire safety maintenance documents required to be kept by building occupiers. This maintenance inspection process works to help make building occupiers more aware of their building fire safety obligations and provides QFES personnel the unique opportunity to interact with the community and identify specific operational considerations that may assist during any subsequent emergency incident.

**CHAIR:** I refer to page 11 of the SDS which highlights the government's commitment to 100 extra full-time-equivalent firefighters and 12 extra fire communication officers. How will this increase improve your delivery of services to the Queensland community?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Our government is committed to ensuring that QFES has the personnel, the infrastructure and equipment to deliver enhanced services and support for the community of Queensland. Fulfilling the government's commitment to 100 extra full-time equivalent, or FTE, firefighters and 12 extra FTE fire communication officers will increase the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services's capacity to deliver front-line services to the Queensland community.

The increase in FTE will enhance QFES's ability to meet the changing nature of Queensland communities and the increasing demand for services. Of the 100 FTE additional firefighters, the placement of 62 firefighters were announced last week. The QFES commissioner has determined the placement of these front-line firefighters based on operational priorities. The regional centres of Queensland are continuing to grow and I am proud to highlight that we are delivering on our election promise to boost front-line services in these areas.

Twenty-one positions have been allocated to Bundaberg, the Sunshine Coast and the Fraser Coast. Twenty will be based in communities from Townsville to Cairns and west to Mount Isa. Central Queensland will welcome 16 additional firefighters. Five will go to the Toowoomba south-west region. This contributes to the government's commitment to creating safe and resilient communities. We still have 38 positions that we are yet to announce, as well as 12 fire communications officers. We will be working with the QFES commissioner, as I said earlier, based on operational requirements as to where the best suited locations for those will be.

**CHAIR:** I hand over to the deputy chair.

**Mr LISTER:** Minister, I will bring you back to question on notice No. 15. In your response you have indicated that there were a total of 11 SES groups closed since 2016, including one in my own electorate of Southern Downs at Yelarbon. I note that more than half of them—seven, in fact—are in the Mackay region. Given Mackay's propensity to be attacked by all sorts of natural disasters, what can the government say to assure us that the response to disasters will not be impacted by those closures?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** SES groups across Queensland are owned by the respective local governments. That is the first point that we need to make. The decision as to whether an SES facility

is opened or closed rests entirely with the respective council in that area. Where possible, opportunities for co-location of emergency service functions including SES are explored by us. Sometimes we can co-locate them with rural fire brigades or something like that in order to help them out. Since 2016, the SES division of QFES has recorded a total of 11 SES groups, as you say, which have been closed by the respective councils. You have the list of those. Would you like me to read them out?

**Mr LISTER:** I have the list.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** It is certainly not a desired thing for us to see SES groups close but, as I say, that is the decision of the local government where they are. As a department we will always work very closely with local government in order to ensure that we can maintain that service. It is a very important service. What you say is right. Mackay certainly sits in that full frontal area for cyclones and major flood events. They do a lot of work up there. To ascertain the exact reason for each one of those around Mackay closing, we would have to check with the local council to see what occurred there.

**Mr MILLAR:** My question is to the minister regarding the final decision of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission on the United Firefighters Union of Australia, the Union of Employees Queensland versus Queensland Auxiliary Firefighters Association. Minister, in reference to page 3 of the SDS, you were responsible for overseeing Queensland Fire and Emergency Services including auxiliary part-time firefighters, which is very much a part of where I come from in Western Queensland. Were you aware of the QIRC decision and were you supportive of the overall findings of the report?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Thank you for the question. Once upon a time, in a previous life well before politics, as I mentioned before, I was a volunteer firefighter of some 20 years in Victoria. Probably for the last four or five of those years I would have been an auxiliary captain, but the Victorian service is a bit different from the Queensland service. I have a very good feel for the commitment it takes to not only be an auxiliary but also lead one of the auxiliary stations. I know that in your electorate you have quite a number of high-performing auxiliary stations. We have around 2,000 auxiliary firefighters in Queensland who give up their time. Even though they get compensated financially, they still walk away from their families and their businesses. They still go without sleep to commit to what they do. In respect of your question, I was aware of that decision after the decision came out. That was a decision of the QIRC. I had no input into that decision. That was something that came purely from the QIRC.

**Mr MILLAR:** Minister, do you support the right of the Auxiliary Firefighters Association to keep representing its members or do you support the UFU in its turf war with part-time firefighters? That is the question I am asking.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** The best way to answer that question is that we have a split in the industrial provisions of auxiliary firefighters, and this is a decision by the QIRC. When we are talking about their pay and their conditions, they are represented by the UFU. However, there is nothing that stops the Auxiliary Firefighters Association from representing the interests of auxiliaries on other things—whether that is the day-to-day business with QFES or potentially things such as uniforms or other matters. When it comes to industrial provisions about their allowances, their pay rates and various things like that, it is the United Firefighters Union that clearly represents them in that respect.

**Mr MILLAR:** I refer to page 3 of the SDS which refers to supporting other volunteer groups. My question is to the commissioner. This morning the *Courier-Mail* has reported that Queensland Fire and Emergency Services will be conducting a review on how it funds and supports Queensland's volunteer marine rescue operations. Commissioner, when was this review first committed to and promised to the state's volunteer marine rescue operations?

**Commissioner Carroll:** For a number of weeks the minister and I have been travelling around the state talking to the various volunteer marine rescue areas as well as the coastguard. From those discussions throughout Queensland it became apparent that there were issues stemming up and down the east coast, and some of those issues have already been alluded to. It was probably just in the last two weeks that we had a discussion as to whether we should be conducting the review. However, we wanted to take our time in making sure that I did have the delegation and the ability to do that under my responsibilities as the commissioner, and therefore the announcement was made today.

**Mr MILLAR:** When do you expect the review to be completed? Will it be completed before budget funding for both the coast and marine rescue is renewed, which is the end of next June?

**Commissioner Carroll:** That is correct. We anticipate the review to be completed by the end of the year, and purposely so, before our agreements are in place next year.

**Mr MILLAR:** My next question is a local one for Beaudesert-Scenic Rim people and certainly the minister. In reference to page 10 of the SDS which outlines the department's role in providing capital

purchase for rural fire brigades, can the minister explain why the Scenic Rim community has had to put up with a rural fire brigade having a temporary facility since 2014? I know that the minister put out a press release about this a couple of days ago, but the government promises year to year to start building this. I think this was promised back in 2015. Why has it taken so long for the Rathdowney community to get a new rural fire station?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Thank you for the question. You are right: we did announce the new Rathdowney fire station a few days ago, and that will be great for that community. My understanding was that there were some issues at Rathdowney in relation to terrain. The station site is going to be on very hilly terrain. My understanding is that that has caused some delays in respect to that.

I can give you the time line, if you like. In October 2015 the footprint of the station was agreed to by rural and auxiliary staff. There were some statutory issues that had to be met including the one-in-500-year flood policy. It took an additional five months for the Department of Transport and Main Roads to provide the requirements for access to that land. Rathdowney does not have a lot of sewerage sites and the station required a sewage retention area. The State Planning Policy also requires a stormwater retention area as the site is over 2½ thousand square metres. Planning for stormwater and sewerage issues took approximately four months to design. TMR required the concept plan for access to the station to be altered, and the concept plan has been altered to address its requirements.

On 28 August 2017 PSBA received advice that the parcel of land acquired at Running Creek Road may not adhere to the Q500 requirements. PSBA was able to confirm on 3 January this year that the site adheres to the Q500 requirements. The issues essentially were around the parcel of land. That was well before my time—the same as you—but essentially that was the lead-up to it. Now that that has been addressed and we know that the land is good, we anticipate we will start construction in October this year. Rathdowney should see their station operational in 2019. I know it has been a long time coming, but I can assure the people of Rathdowney that there has been no political slow going on this. It is exactly as I stated.

**Mr MILLAR:** Minister, with your indulgence, can you commit to building the Longreach fire station in the next financial year and that we will not have any hold-ups?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** I think I have had this conversation with you in the House. I would be very surprised if I came to estimates and I did not get a question about Longreach. My understanding is that we have purchased land at Emu Street and it will be completed by mid-June 2021. I look forward to coming out and turning the first sod and turning the key with the local member. How does that sound?

**Mr MILLAR:** That sounds good.

**Mr McDONALD:** Commissioner, it is a privilege for me to be able to ask a question. Thank you to our emergency services, which do a wonderful job in our community. My question is around volunteerism. The system of SES, auxiliary and rural fire brigades—locals helping locals—is a wonderful model, but what is the service doing to attract volunteers to those organisations?

**Commissioner Carroll:** In recent years we have done a lot of work in terms of a volunteerism strategy—probably one of the first of its kind in Australia. We took a director off-line to travel around the state and in focus groups talked to many people in terms of our volunteering strategy for the future. We conducted some 29 workshops across Queensland, with 600 volunteers and staff participating in these workshops.

As a result of what we found, we do have a volunteering strategy in place and this is really about valuing volunteers. Some of those initiatives include an enhanced emergency services volunteer grants program; a new category of SES volunteer providing more flexible membership—you would know that some of the issues with the SES are the very high attrition rates, so there is a new category around that; recording in an emergency services volunteer register; the introduction of a state SES response unit, which was not in place before—everyone deployed from their various areas; and the establishment of a leadership development program particularly around volunteers.

The other thing with volunteers now being a part of the department is that there is a lot more access to corporate support, ICT and training within the department. All 42,000 of them are highly valued by QFES and are a very important part not only of the department but also of the Queensland community.

**Mr MILLAR:** I refer to question on notice No. 19 in regard to vegetation management laws and the impact it could have on the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Minister, I note in your answer you said that the new vegetation management laws will not hamper the ability of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to mitigate or respond to bushfires. In response to part (b)

you also said that the vegetation management laws are not expected to lead to an increase in workload for the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Given that is your response to the question, did your department do departmental modelling in regard to the vegetation management laws when they were introduced?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Thank you for the question. I am going to answer part of that and then I will hand to the commissioner for the operational component. The first part is that, as you know, the Vegetation Management Act was managed by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and is solely their responsibility. QFES did provide agency consultation on those amendments, and I can report that the changes do not hamper the ability of QFES to undertake the work, whether it is responding to some of the mitigation strategies that go on. There is nothing that stops landholders from being able to obtain a permit to burn from their local fire wardens, just like they have done for decades before. I will hand over to the commissioner because I think the second part of your question talked about modelling.

**Mr MILLAR:** Yes.

**Commissioner Carroll:** Queensland Fire and Emergency Services was heavily consulted in terms of the recent amendments and worked closely with the department of natural resources in relation to this. From our perspective, we found that the changes are not going to hamper the ability of QFES to mitigate or respond to bushfires. In fact, consistent with the Fire and Emergency Services Act, landholders will still be able to undertake hazard reduction burning by obtaining fire permits and whatnot. We were heavily consulted and certainly there are no impacts for us or landowners.

**Mr MILLAR:** So departmental modelling was done in regard to the laws?

**Commissioner Carroll:** I would have—if you bear with me—to consult on that. I could take a question on notice or have it answered now. I know there was heavy consultation but not the exact detail of all the consultation.

**CHAIR:** This will be the last answer.

**Commissioner Carroll:** Can I introduce Assistant Commissioner Tom Dawson from our Rural Fire Service.

**Assistant Commissioner Dawson:** We have two operational periods in Rural Fire Service. One is Operational Cool Burn, which is the preparation and preparedness for the bushfire season—so working with landowners. We engaged with all the state government owned landowners and as many of the public landowners as possible. To their way of thinking, nothing changed from our engagement. They could still acquire permits, they could still clear their existing fire breaks, existing locations or lands and things of that nature.

Cool Burn is an engagement with those local landowners, particularly through the area fire management groups. This is where we will engage with all of the landowners in a defined area. There are roughly 17 area fire management groups around the state. They meet on a regular basis, reporting back into the service. That activity is still going and recording well. Coming into the season, the big area is those areas that do not get managed and whether the firebreaks have been upgraded—they can be graded or sprayed—or whether any vegetation reduction has actually occurred. That is still reported in the system. Our monitoring at the moment is still progressing on target. We always like to see more, but we are reliant on the landowners doing more. Hopefully that helps, but it is all on modelling.

**Mr MILLAR:** Yes, it does. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** The time allocated for consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolio of Fire and Emergency Services has expired. Minister, there were some questions taken on notice. Are there any that you want to answer now?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** We do not have them now. I think there were two questions and we did indicate that they are going to take a bit of work to pull them together.

**Mr MILLAR:** I am happy with that.

**CHAIR:** The committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice must be provided to the committee secretariat by 3 pm on Monday, 30 July 2018. You can check the exact wording of any outstanding questions in the proof transcript of this session of the hearing, which will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website in approximately two hours. I would like to thank you, Minister, and the departmental officers for your attendance. Minister, if there is anyone you wish to thank, you may take a moment to do so now.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** Thank you, Mr Chair. Very quickly, I would like to thank the departmental staff from QFES, IGEM and PSBA, in particular Commissioner Carroll; the Inspector-General Emergency Management, Iain Mackenzie; and the Chief Operating Officer from PSBA, Peter Griffin. I would also like to thank all of the senior executives who are behind me and my office staff who have put in a huge amount of work, especially my chief of staff, Peter Clarke, who is beside me, as well as our liaison officers from our department. They have endured many questions from me in preparation for these estimates. I also want to thank the committee, yourself, the staff, the members and my shadow, the member for Gregory.

I close by recognising all of our QFES team who are currently on duty or on call, our volunteers, our auxiliaries and particularly those who are out on calls right now. I want to acknowledge C Shift, which is our night shift on duty across Queensland. I understand there are 334 career firefighters and station officers on shift right now from C Shift staffing 69 stations, as well as our specialist response branch, our watch desk at Kedron and our seven staffed fire comms across Queensland. I wish them all a safe and very, very quiet night out there in Queensland.

**CHAIR:** I would like to take this opportunity to thank Hansard and the secretariat, who have kept us fed and watered today. I thank anyone else who has assisted for all of your hard work behind the scenes. I declare the hearing closed.

**The committee adjourned at 7.33 pm.**