

THURSDAY, 4 AUGUST 2022

ESTIMATES—COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE— COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING; DIGITAL ECONOMY; ARTS

Estimate Committee Members

Ms CP McMillan—Chair
Mr MC Berkman
Mr SA Bennett
Ms CL Lui
Dr MA. Robinson
Mr RJ Skelton

Members in Attendance

Dr A MacMahon
Mr TL Mander
Mr J-PH Langbroek
Dr CAC Rowan
Ms AJ Camm

In Attendance

Hon. LM Enoch, Minister for Communities and Housing, Digital Economy and the Arts
Ms M Hallam, Chief of Staff
Mr C Vernon, Senior Policy Adviser

Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy

Ms C O'Connor, Director-General

Ms A Proberts, Director, Office of the Director-General

Ms M-A Curtis, Associate Director-General, Housing and Homelessness Services

Mr C McLaren, Chief Customer and Digital Officer, Queensland Government Customer and Digital Group

Ms A Proberts, Director

Mr M Nye, Deputy Director-General, Strategy and Corporate Services

Queensland Museum


Dr J Thompson PSM, Chief Executive Officer

Arts Queensland

Ms K Herring PSM, Deputy Director-General

Ms L Roper, Manager, Office of the Deputy Director General

The committee met at 9.00 am.

 **CHAIR:** Good morning. I declare open this estimates hearing of the Community Support and Services Committee. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet this morning and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge

the Hon. Leeanne Enoch, the member for Algeester and Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts as a First Nations woman. I acknowledge my colleague, Ms Cynthia Lui, the member for Cook, who is the first Torres Strait Islander woman to be elected to the Queensland parliament. We are very fortunate to live in a country with two of the oldest continuing cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whose lands, winds and waters we all now share. I also acknowledge any other First Nations people who may be present at estimates this morning.

I am Corrine McMillan, the member for Mansfield and chair of the committee. Mr Stephen Bennett, the member for Burnett, is the deputy chair. The other members of the committee are Mr Michael Berkman, the member for Maiwar; Ms Cynthia Lui, whom I have mentioned, the member for Cook; Dr Mark Robinson, the member for Oodgeroo; and Mr Rob Skelton, the member for Nicklin. The committee has granted leave for a number of non-committee members to attend and ask questions at the hearing today and our committee welcomes them. Other members may seek leave over the course of the proceedings today.

Today the committee will consider the Appropriation Bill 2022 and the budget 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—I welcome our live viewers this morning—televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasters of the proceedings are available from the secretariat. I encourage everyone to wear face masks whilst in the chamber and I remind members and officials to remove face masks while speaking.

This year, the House has determined the program for the committee's estimates. The committee will examine the portfolio areas in the following order: communities, housing and digital economy from 9 am to 10.45 am; the arts from 11 am to 11.45 am; seniors and disability services from 12.30 to 1.45 pm; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, including the Family Responsibilities Commission, from 2 pm to 3.15 pm; children and youth justice from 3.30 pm to 5.15 pm; and multicultural affairs from 5.30 pm to 6.15 pm.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2022 for the portfolio of the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio until 11.45 am and will suspend proceedings during that time for a break from 10.45 am to 11 am. As was determined by the House, the committee will consider the minister's portfolio areas as follows: communities, housing and digital economy from 9 am to 10.45 am; and arts from 11 am to 11.45 am. I remind honourable members that matters relating to those portfolio areas can be raised only during the time specified for the area, as was agreed by the House.

The following non-committee members have sought and been granted leave to participate in the hearing in accordance with the standing orders: the members for Broadwater, Buderim, Chatsworth, Everton, Glass House, Kawana, Maroochydore, Moggill, Scenic Rim, South Brisbane, Surfers Paradise and Whitsunday. The committee welcomes those members.

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 this parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in the Legislative Assembly apply to 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.

As chair of this committee, I intend to guide proceedings today so that the relevant issues can be exposed fully and explored fully and to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee. I wish to reiterate to all those participating in today's hearing of the sentiment of Mr Speaker's ruling of 30 July 2018 when he recognised the importance of maintaining the dignity of the estimates process in terms of questioning, general behaviour and adherence to the standing orders. Last week Mr Speaker reminded all members that the estimates process was created to ensure that proper scrutiny occurs and that the people responsible for various portfolio areas are provided the opportunity to answer questions. Standing order 185, in relation to disorderly members, further determines the conduct of parliamentarians during the estimates hearings. I will exercise this standing order as required to ensure that our behaviour today reflects the expectations that all our communities have of parliamentarians.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the minister, the director-general, officials and members of the public to the hearing. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials to identify themselves the first time that they answer a question that is referred to them by the minister or the director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of communities, housing and digital economy open for examination. The question before the committee today is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

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

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair and members. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of this land on which we are meeting. The Palaszczuk government works every day to support and enrich the lives of all Queenslanders. Queenslanders have withstood challenging times and our government supports Queensland communities to overcome adversity. This year we have witnessed floods that tragically claimed lives and destroyed homes and businesses. The government moved quickly to support people in impacted areas, standing up grants and community recovery hubs. 53,795 payments were made to impacted Queenslanders, with more than \$32.1 million benefitting 104,000 people.

Community and social service organisations are vital to our community recovery responses. That is one reason we have committed \$125.6 million over four years to strengthen the sector. Central to this commitment is a \$115.8 million boost to neighbourhood and community centre funding over four years. This includes \$51.8 million to boost minimal operational funding for 127 state government funded NCCs from around \$124,000 to \$230,000 annually, which is the biggest uplift to base funding ever.

NCCs are also vital to combatting social isolation and loneliness across Queensland. The government is acting on the recommendations from the inquiry into social isolation and loneliness. In addition to our record NCC funding boost, the budget includes funding for initiatives to combat social isolation and loneliness, including \$4 million over four years for an innovation fund.

We are 12 months into our four-year rolling program under our Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025. We are investing \$2.9 billion over four years to underpin the action plan, which is the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing in Queensland's history. However, the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, mass migration into our state, workforce and building supply chain constraints and consecutive flooding events have presented significant hurdles and we are not immune to these challenges.

Despite this, we are getting on with the job of delivering housing for vulnerable Queenslanders. We have exceeded our first-year target of 727 new social housing commencements, commencing 832 new social homes in 2021-22. We completed 410 new social homes for Queenslanders in the same year. We have a proven track record on delivering housing for Queenslanders. Since coming to government, we have commenced 4,882 new social and affordable homes and completed 3,917 across Queensland.

We are not just building more homes; we are delivering housing outcomes right across the system. In 2021-22 we delivered almost 200,000 forms of housing assistance to households or individuals. We have launched our Help to Home initiative to deliver 1,000 housing solutions to Queenslanders in need through head leasing private market properties for people on the Social Housing Register.

We are pulling every lever at our disposal to increase the supply of social and affordable homes in Queensland. Our solutions come from across government. The Treasurer is overseeing Queensland's Build-to-Rent initiative, which is delivering 750 new dwellings specifically for the rental market. The Treasurer has also announced that a further 1,200 new social and affordable homes will be delivered in partnership with a community housing provider under our \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund. The Deputy Premier is unlocking more land supply to make housing more affordable through a \$200 million investment.

My department is working hard to implement the recommendation from the Auditor-General's report into delivering social housing services. Mid-last year, the department commenced the process of contacting all applicants on the social housing register. Through that process, it canvassed 98 per cent of households and found that 21 per cent were uncontactable, no longer eligible or no longer required social housing. In March this year, the department also implemented a consistent statewide process to identify, approve and record priority applications. We will continue to deliver improved products and services and we will continue to support vulnerable Queenslanders seeking housing solutions. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the department and the staff at our housing service centres who are on the front line supporting vulnerable Queenslanders in these challenging times.

The budget includes a \$115.5 million boost over four years for Queensland's arts sector and cultural infrastructure. This includes \$50 million to support the second action plan of Creative Together. This new investment builds on strong outcomes from the first action plan, including 10,000 employment opportunities and cultural events that engage more than two million audience members. To date we have injected almost \$80 million into the delivery of Creative Together, supporting Queensland's path to treaty, embracing opportunities for Brisbane 2032 and demonstrating our commitment to Queensland's creative future. The Palaszczuk government has a strong focus on supporting vulnerable Queenslanders and on fostering connected and creative communities.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I now call the deputy chair for his first question.

Mr BENNETT: Thank you. I defer to the shadow minister.

Mr MANDER: My first question is to the minister. How many social houses could have been constructed with the \$220 million that was wasted on the Wellcamp quarantine facility?

CHAIR: Member, I might just stop you there. Would you mind rephrasing that question, because the question contains an inference. Would you mind rephrasing that question for me, please?

Mr MANDER: Minister, how many social houses could be constructed with the \$220 million that was spent on the Wellcamp quarantine camp?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. The member is comparing the construction of a purpose-built health facility, which of course has very distinct needs and prerequisites in terms of being able to be operational. That particular facility was built to keep the COVID-19 virus contained, so it had particular design features. In terms of the build for social housing, that changes right across the state, but we are continuing to ensure that we are commencing our target amounts of social housing. In fact last year, as I have already said in my opening remarks, our target was 727 social homes to be commenced. We exceeded that, with 832 social homes being commenced in that same period. That is due to the incredibly hard work of the department to continue to ensure that we are commencing that. That is in stark contrast to what we saw when the member for Everton was the housing minister. We saw zero commencements in many locations right across Queensland—zero commencements in Logan in 2013-14—

Mr MANDER: Point of order, Chair, under standing order 118 with regard to relevance. The question was quite specific. The minister has now strolled off into other subject matters.

CHAIR: Thank you, member. I believe the minister has answered your question.

Mr MANDER: Minister, I have been inundated with emails from everyday Queenslanders who see the absurdity of a 1,000-bed facility with nobody in it and the tens of thousands of people on the social housing waiting list. Why can Queensland's most vulnerable people not be housed in this facility?

Ms ENOCH: As I have already said, the Queensland Regional Accommodation Centre absolutely was made available for crisis accommodation during, for instance, the summer floods. The department continues to look at all options that are fit for purpose. The facility in question was designed specifically for a response to COVID-19. Certainly, that was developed in consultation with health professionals to ensure we had a state-of-the-art quarantine facility for that time. It remains, as I said, for the department to look at all options, and it continues to be an option they are looking at in terms of being fit for purpose.

Mr MANDER: Have you investigated whether the facility can be repurposed to house the most vulnerable Queenslanders?

Ms ENOCH: As I said, that facility was made available for crisis accommodation during the summer floods, for instance—as a crisis accommodation option. The department has been onsite looking at the appropriateness of the site for any further crisis accommodation. Ultimately, we are working with the sector beyond that. Certainly we want to see lots of different options to be able to support people right across Queensland—not just in one location. That is why we have seen not just the record \$2.9 billion investment—and the ability now, as I have said, to commence more social housing properties than we had targeted for last year—but also the establishment of a Help to Home headleasing initiative. We publicly launched that just recently. We are seeking 1,000 new headleases across Queensland to be able to inject more stock into the system in a very quick way.

Mr MANDER: Point of order, Chair, again on relevance. My question was quite specific about the repurposing of Wellcamp. I believe that the minister has answered that question.

CHAIR: Member, I was listening, as you would imagine, quite intently to the minister's response. I do believe that the minister was being responsive to the question that you asked. I do ask the minister to round out her answer and we will then move on to a further question.

Ms ENOCH: The point of my sharing the other information is that, obviously, we are looking at all options. Nothing is off the table. We are looking at options right across Queensland. We are experiencing unprecedented and compounding challenges, as I mentioned in my opening remarks—everything from mass migration into the state, flooding events that have impacted thousands of properties, shortfalls in terms of supply chain and workforce issues. All of these things have been compounding in terms of our ability to move quickly to get more stock into the system. That is why we are looking at every single option. Nothing is off the table. We are looking for fit-for-purpose options including the headleasing option that I have just mentioned.

Mr MANDER: Minister, there are around 2,000 people in Toowoomba itself who are on the public housing waiting list. Surely arrangements could be made to use the 1,000-bed facility which is going to lay vacant for the next six months to help house those vulnerable people in the Toowoomba area.

Ms ENOCH: As I have already said, nothing is off the table, member. The department—

Mr MANDER: So that could happen?

CHAIR: Member, I will not today tolerate interjections of the member. You have asked the minister a question. We will conduct a respectful debate that reflects the expectations that our communities have of us.

Ms ENOCH: As I have said numerous times already since we began this hearing, the department is looking at all options to be able to support what is unprecedented times. In terms of Toowoomba specifically, the department has been working with specialist homelessness services in that region regarding need and demand. They continue to do that work and look for solutions to be able to support those services.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, on 30 June last year there were 50,000 people on the social housing register. Could you please advise what that number is as at 30 June this year?

Ms O'Connor: Member, as you are aware, housing register data is published each September on the open data portal. That is because we get a full year's data and do the validation and de-identification needed before it can be published. I think I also need to mention that that de-identification and validation has been underlined as critical by the Information Commissioner in March 2020. We do that to make sure that the datasets do not compromise the privacy of individuals and that the data cannot be cross-referenced with other data sources to identify individuals. When you are dealing with families and women escaping domestic violence that is particularly important.

Last year at 30 June, as you say, there were 27,933 households on the register. You will be aware of course that the Auditor-General, in his report, indicated that there were 30,922 households on the register. I can advise that, while we will not publish the datasets until they are cleansed, de-identified and validated, as at 30 June 2022 there are 27,437 households on the register.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, you mentioned that the Auditor-General mentioned a 30,000 figure and then you have said there is a 27,000 figure. That figure is less. Is that because of the audit that is being done of the social housing register that was mentioned by the Auditor-General?

Ms O'Connor: I am happy to explain that. First of all let me say that the department welcomes the report from the Auditor-General. I wrote to him in November after he raised with me the potential for the audit and indicated that yes there were pressures on the system but it was worthwhile for him to undertake that audit. In fact, the timing was perfect in terms of the work we had already commenced.

Member, you will recall that last year I said to you that it was a very active system and that we were ringing people on the system to make sure that their circumstances were known to the department and that during COVID-19 they had not encountered any changes that needed to be notified. The minister indicated in her opening remarks that we have contacted 98 per cent of applicants on the housing register over the last 12 months to get that very clear and precise picture of those most in need of housing. This work was supported by the Auditor-General and he has also indicated ways in which we can continue that work.

When we contacted applicants we found that there were 21 per cent of applicants, as the minister said, who for were no longer in need of social housing or were no longer eligible because they had a change in their circumstances. That can include increased income, it can include another family member moving onto the premises et cetera. There were quite a number who were uncontactable. We have removed those applications from the register. My expectation is that the department does this very thoroughly and that we use multiple methods of contact, including phone calls, text messages, letters and emails. That is why the number is lower.

Mr MANDER: I will continue to follow that up so I can get my head around the figures. You mentioned that 21 per cent said they were no longer eligible or need social housing. I assume that means they have been removed from the register; is that correct?

Ms O'Connor: Some 21 per cent of applicants were no longer in need of social housing—they had resolved their own issue, moved in with family, got married or whatever—no longer eligible for social housing due to a change in circumstance or were uncontactable.

Mr MANDER: And therefore they were removed from the register?

Ms O'Connor: That is right.

Mr MANDER: Is 21 per cent the total figure that were removed?

Ms O'Connor: Yes.

Mr MANDER: If I go back to the figure of 30,000, 21 per cent is a fifth of that figure. That would bring that down to about 24,000. So there has been an increase in real terms with regard to the people on the housing list after the audit has been done?

Ms O'Connor: Will I answer?

Mr MANDER: The question is to the director-general.

CHAIR: Member, let us be cautious not to engage in cross-chamber banter. Member, perhaps if you pose a question to the director-general or to the minister.

Mr MANDER: I thought I did, Chair. What I am trying to do is get a handle on the figures, which I think Queenslanders deserve to know. The director-general has been very forthright. I am just trying to clarify those figures. The Audit Office said there were around 30,000 households on the list. The director-general has now said that 21 per cent of people have now been removed from the register—that is a fifth; that is a big number. If you take 6,000 from 30,000 that is 24,000, but the figure was 27,000. That would mean that there has been a net increase of people on the social housing waiting list after the audit was done. I am simply wanting that confirmed.

Ms ENOCH: Through the chair, just to be clear for the member—

Mr MANDER: Point of order: my question is to the director-general not to the minister.

CHAIR: That is correct. Thank you, member. The director-general is able to answer the question and is similarly able to refer the question to the minister. There are inferences you are making in that question and I would not be so rude as to point out what those inferences might be.

Mr MANDER: Feel welcome to because I do not know what they are.

CHAIR: Member, you have a question to the director-general; is that correct?

Mr MANDER: For the third time, yes, I have, and I have asked it.

Ms ENOCH: There is no need to be rude.

Ms O'Connor: Every single year people come forward and apply for social housing. We have people coming off the register and we have people coming on to the register. That is the normal flow of the social housing register lifecycle. People have of course entered the register this year and we have removed people as a result of the processes that I have described to you so far.

Ms ENOCH: Can I add to that for the benefit of the committee—

Mr MANDER: Point of order—

CHAIR: Sorry, member, the minister has a contribution to make—

Mr MANDER: Point of order: that contravenes the standing orders. My question was asked directly to the director-general. I did not ask the minister for a comment. If I want the minister to make a comment, I will ask her a question.

CHAIR: The minister will continue.

Mr MANDER: Point of order—

CHAIR: Member, I consider your conduct to be reflecting on the chair.

Mr MANDER: I apologise for that, but please I have a point of order.

CHAIR: Thank you, member.

Mr MANDER: I seek clarity that the time the minister speaks will be part of government time and not part of non-government time.

CHAIR: Thank you. That is a very valid point and I am happy to take that time from government time.

Ms ENOCH: For the benefit of the committee, the director-general is correct in terms of the management of the normal flow of entry and exit from the social housing register. During COVID, that period of time, the department did not undertake business-as-usual practices with regard to the general entry and exit flow of the social housing register. Last year, as the restrictions were being lifted, the department began that work once again, contacting households who were on the social housing register to undertake business-as-usual practice. As the director-general has said, 21 per cent of those who were on the social housing register and who may have been on there for quite some time—many months perhaps and obviously secure during the COVID-19 restrictions time—were then canvassed regarding any changes in their circumstances. That is normal business as usual.

What we saw under the LNP when they were in power was a very different approach. They literally sent a letter to somebody and if they did not respond in time removed them from the register. That is what they did. This department has made every effort to contact people on the social housing register, as they normally do, through a person centred approach and has been managing the entry and exit flow as you would expect.

CHAIR: We will now return to non-government time.

Mr BERKMAN: I want to return to the slightly vexed issue of the social housing eligibility criteria. Director-General, section 14 of the Housing Regulation very specifically states in subsection (3)—

Social Housing Eligibility Criteria means the document with that name published by the department.

Is it the case that at any point in time there is a document that is the social housing eligibility criteria?

Ms O'Connor: Yes.

Mr BERKMAN: Chair, I would like to table an email and a webpage. I have six copies. I think it should be uncontroversial.

CHAIR: As a member of the committee, you are able to table a document. Could you send a copy my way please?

Mr BERKMAN: Yes. There are a couple of copies for the minister and the director-general. Apologies that they are not stapled neatly in bundles.

CHAIR: Can I pause the release of the document titled 'Maiwar Electorate Office'? It does contain the personal details of a public servant. I am happy for the document titled 'Check your eligibility' to be tabled, but I ask chamber attendants to collect the personalised email.

Mr BERKMAN: My apologies. I should have thought before printing out that email from the caucus liaison officer. In general terms, what that email sets out is that I made a request for the social housing eligibility criteria of the minister's caucus liaison officer. They responded with a web link, which is the second document that is printed out. I am looking to confirm, if I could, Ms O'Connor, that document that you have, that I printed out from the web link, is the social housing eligibility criteria?

Ms O'Connor: Can I just clarify, member, you have printed out this document from the website?

Mr BERKMAN: The web link that was provided by the caucus liaison officer.

Ms O'Connor: That would be the criteria. I have identified it. Yes.

Mr BERKMAN: That is the social housing eligibility criteria. I have one follow-up question and then I would like to pass to the member for South Brisbane. The heading of section 7 in that document is 'Wellbeing'. Can you advise the committee when those wellbeing criteria became a part of the social housing eligibility criteria?

Ms O'Connor: Member, I think you asked this question at a previous estimates hearing.

Mr BERKMAN: I am only asking again because I am still deeply unclear on when those became a part of the eligibility criteria.

Ms O'Connor: If I can just continue, you have asked this before. We had a look at the issue that you raised before to try to get to the bottom of it. I might pass to my associate director-general, Mary-Anne Curtis, who can throw some light on the question you are asking about the wellbeing indicators.

Mr BERKMAN: To be very clear, the question is: when did those become a part of the criteria?

Ms Curtis: I am advised, as the director-general has mentioned, that the eligibility criteria for social housing is published on our website. There are a number of criteria that are outlined on the website. There has been a reframe of those criteria. Some of the previous wording from the criteria has been brought in underneath that wellbeing criteria that you are referring to. I will have to confirm the time frame for that because I was not in the department at that time, but that is my understanding.

Mr BERKMAN: First of all, could that question about when those wellbeing criteria were added be taken on notice?

CHAIR: Member for Maiwar, the only person who can take a question on notice is the minister.

Mr BERKMAN: Understood.

CHAIR: Minister, are you prepared to take that question on notice?

Ms ENOCH: I am happy to bring it back to this hearing. I understand that the director-general has been able to find some further information to add to the response.

Ms O'Connor: The advice that we have is that in around October 2019—and neither the associate nor I were in the department at the time—there was further clarification made to the social housing eligibility criteria. To be very clear about what factors were examined, the information we have is that the intake and assessment reform under the Queensland Housing Strategy did reframe, as the associate has said, those criteria to bring into the criteria core eligibility requirements which continued. Two eligibility criteria from the previous assessment process—appropriateness of current housing criteria and the accessibility sustainability criterion—were collapsed and brought together and renamed as 'wellbeing' criteria.

In terms of your question, member, those things existed before but they were not visible and transparent. They were made visible and transparent under the Queensland Housing Strategy amendments on the system.

CHAIR: We will now move to government questions.

Mr BERKMAN: Chair, I realise this has been a long line of questioning. Could I please just wrap this up?

CHAIR: We will come back to you, member.

Ms LUI: With reference to page 2 of the SDS, will the minister update the committee on the Palaszczuk government's progress against any key milestones in the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025?

Ms ENOCH: Last year the Palaszczuk government announced the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing in Queensland's history as part of our Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025. This \$2.9 billion investment will increase the social and affordable housing supply by almost 10,000 over the life of the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027 including 7,400 new homes commenced by June 2025 under this action plan.

We have a proven track record. We have commenced 4,822 new social and affordable homes already and completed 3,917 across Queensland since the Palaszczuk government came to office in 2015. Over the last 12 months the Palaszczuk government has been working tirelessly to improve housing outcomes for Queenslanders. Under QuickStarts Qld we have exceeded our first-year target of 727 new social homes commenced by 30 June 2022, achieving the commencement of 832 new social homes across Queensland in 2021-22. That means we are hitting the milestones we set out to achieve and are building more homes for the most vulnerable in our community.

I have been out and about across Queensland to see firsthand the hard work of my department to deliver more social housing stock. I have turned sod, inspected building sites, opened new complexes and met with social tenants in Bundaberg, Townsville, Cairns, Ipswich, Gold Coast, Rockhampton—and the list goes on. I travelled to Gympie, where I announced our \$10.5 million investment to fast-track Gympie's local housing action plan. We are working with other local councils, including remote Indigenous councils, to finalise their local housing action plans. We recently launched our Help to Home initiative and we have already signed up 18 dwellings in Beenleigh with the help of Mangrove Housing. This program incentivises private investors to sign up, with a guaranteed lease for two years and three months rent in advance paid each quarter. Most importantly, it will mean 1,000 more housing solutions for vulnerable Queenslanders.

We know that pressures on the rental market and housing sector are having an impact on young people. That is why we have delivered a new 40-unit youth foyer on the Gold Coast after the success of the Logan Youth Foyer. I was very pleased to visit there yesterday for the one-year anniversary of

their opening and speak with some of the young people who have been residents there over that 12 months to see the incredible impact that foyer has had on their lives. We are building another youth foyer in Townsville to provide 40 new homes for young people who need it most.

We also know that older women are the fastest growing group of people to experience homelessness in Queensland. That is why earlier this year I announced a \$14 million housing older women strategy to co-design new homes and deliver specialised support services for older women, including a new housing support hub and advisory group. We continue to work with specialist homelessness services with an investment of more than \$160 million in the 2022-23 Queensland state budget to support those most at risk.

In June 2022 the Premier announced an immediate housing response package backed by a \$16 million investment to help families secure or sustain a home. This targeted response will help families in urgent housing need across Queensland, prioritising First Nations peoples, people experiencing domestic and family violence, young people and older people.

Our work extends beyond my department's responsibilities. In partnership with the private sector, the Treasurer has overseen Queensland's Build-to-Rent initiative, which will deliver 750 new dwellings specifically for the rental market. Our \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, the first of its kind in Queensland, is already delivering. The Palaszczuk government has already announced that further 1,200 new social and affording homes delivered in partnership with Queensland Investment Corporation and Brisbane Housing Company, including 118 new social and affordable homes for Brisbane's north side. In an important signal of confidence in our approach, the Australian Retirement Trust has partnered with investment manager QIC to fund a \$500 million portfolio of affordable housing in Queensland.

We are also unlocking land supply with a \$200 million investment to make housing more affordable in the release of the Draft Caboolture West Interim Infrastructure Plan. Over the next 40 years Caboolture West will develop to be the size of a regional city, ultimately accommodating homes for around 70,000 people. We are also increasing housing supply to provide support for young people at risk of homelessness and housing instability to enable them to achieve independence through our youth foyers. The two foyers in operation, one in Logan and one at Gold Coast, have been an incredible success. I look forward to seeing the Townsville foyer completed.

We are not just building more homes; we are helping Queenslanders right across the system find housing solutions. Last year my department helped Queenslanders with close to 200,000 forms of housing assistance. We are delivering under our action plan, we are hitting our targets, and we are pulling every lever at our disposal to ensure Queenslanders have access to safe, secure and affordable housing.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the SDS, will the minister advise how the Palaszczuk government is delivering supply as part of the Queensland Housing Investment Growth Initiative, specifically with respect to QuickStarts Qld?

Ms ENOCH: As I have said a couple of times already, the QuickStarts program has had a great start. That is against a backdrop of some great success from the Palaszczuk government since we came to government. I will clarify for the committee and *Hansard* that we have commenced 4,882 new social and affordable homes and completed 3,917 across the state.

Over the last 12 months we have been working diligently to improve housing outcomes for Queenslanders. We have exceeded our first-year target, as I have already said. We had a target of 727 to commence last year and we exceeded that with 832. I want to again acknowledge the incredibly hardworking staff of the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, who really pulled out all the stops knowing that we needed to commence as many as we could given the fact that, when we came to office, there were 428 fewer social housing dwellings in this state as a result of the policy settings of the former LNP government. They have worked incredibly hard to make sure we could have that many commencements and completions since coming to office and to exceed our target through QuickStarts in what have been very challenging times.

We launched the Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan in June 2021 with a \$2.9 billion investment to help more vulnerable Queenslanders into homes quicker. As you have heard many times, and I think it is something that we need to remind ourselves of, that \$2.9 billion represents the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing in Queensland's history. It will mean that over the life of the housing strategy we will see 10,000 new social and affordable homes added to the stock. That includes 7,400 new social and affordable homes commenced by 30 June 2025 from our second action plan.

The Queensland Housing Investment Growth Initiative, QHIGI, is delivering a range of housing types based on local need. It is an investment in regional Queensland, stimulating local economies and creating jobs. An additional 3,600 homes will be funded through our \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund with the first projects to be in South-East Queensland. As well, 1,200 new social and affordable homes have already been announced through our partnership with Brisbane Housing Company. We are also head leasing up to 1,000 homes from the private market over two years through the \$40 million Help to Home initiative. I just want to again reiterate for the chair and committee that this is an important part of ensuring that we find solutions in the immediate term.

We are looking for those homes that may currently be in the short holiday letting space. We are calling on Queenslanders who own more than one property and are currently letting it out for the short term to potentially provide that property to the Queensland government through our Help to Home program, ensuring we will be able to provide two years guaranteed rent through that leasing arrangement. It is an arrangement that provides security not only for the investor but also for those people who need housing right now. We are looking for those new-to-market properties and those properties that are potentially in the short-term Airbnb holiday let space. We need those back into longer-term housing solutions, and this program allows that.

Not only are we building properties—and we know that it takes time to get those properties out of the ground; we are also looking for immediate solutions through this 1,000 headleasing arrangement through our Help to Home, which is a \$40 million investment. That goes along with continued brokerage funding and support for short-term and temporary solutions whilst we continue our record investment in building social and affordable homes.

CHAIR: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the SDS, will you outline for the committee how the Palaszczuk government is helping Queenslanders find housing solutions in response to unprecedented pressure on the housing market?

Ms ENOCH: Thank you for the question. I think every member of the committee, including visiting members, indeed all Queenslanders, are fully aware of the compounding constraints and challenges we are facing in this state with regard to the construction industry and to housing—more broadly, the full housing system. That includes the ability to purchase an affordable home, to rent in the private market or, with regard to the area that my department has responsibility for, to gain social housing, for instance.

We know that we are not the only state that is experiencing that; it is right across Australia. When I recently met with all housing ministers and the new federal housing minister, this was an absolutely unifying conversation—about the pressures that every state is feeling in this space. We talk about the ability to gain actual materials because the supply chain is obviously under a lot of pressure. Labour market forces are also under pressure. In Queensland we have seen mass migration into our state, and this continues to be a huge challenge.

As I have already said, our \$2.9 billion record investment in social and affordable housing is meeting and exceeding its targets, but it will take time to get houses out of the ground. Even though we have commenced and completed thousands of new social and affordable homes since this government came to office, this was on the back of a net decline of social housing in this state of 428 under the former LNP. That was incredibly disappointing, so we had to build those back and build more. We have had to continue doing that work.

We understand that there are short-term pressures, and that is why during budget week the Premier and I announced an immediate housing response package, backed by a \$16 million investment in services and supports, to help families in particular secure and sustain a home. We are doing that through supporting \$7 million to our existing Rental Security Subsidy scheme to assist around 700 families to sustain tenancies. What we usually see in this scheme that already exists is \$5,000 over six months to support a family to sustain their private rental property through this rental subsidy scheme. We have extended that to \$10,000 over 12 months to try to help families in particular to sustain their private rental property or to gain a private rental property.

We have provided an extra \$6 million for specialist homelessness services to broker additional temporary emergency accommodation and short-term accommodation. This means around 700 families will be supported with emergency accommodation for up to a month while they receive support for their longer term housing needs. We are also funding through an additional \$3 million extra support workers in funded specialised homelessness services to assist families to stay in their current home or to secure a new tenancy. This immediate housing response package is being delivered alongside our current efforts to boost longer term housing supply through that record investment.

As a government we are working hard to respond to the pressures of the housing market, and our \$16 million immediate housing response package puts this commitment into action.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the SDS, would you be able to outline how the Palaszczuk government is investing in housing and support for older women experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Queensland?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Nicklin for the question. When I became the Minister for Housing at the very end of 2020, it was very clear that one of the largest growing cohorts of people who were experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness were older women. That pressure is something that our specialist homelessness services have made clear to us. I was able to engage very directly, in those first few months of becoming the housing minister, with an older women's advocacy group who, through their own lived experiences, were able to support some of the policy direction that we were taking.

That is why I was able to announce an investment in a housing older women's strategy. We are investing almost \$14 million to build new homes and deliver specialised housing support services to older women, ensuring they have the security and stability of a home. Earlier this year I joined Minister Scanlon and the Housing Older Women Movement—who are an incredibly passionate group of women—on the Gold Coast to announce the Housing Outcomes for Older Women Initiative. For the benefit of the committee, the program is comprised of five pillars.

The first is a new housing older women advisory group, which I can advise was established on 29 June this year after consultation with not just the Housing Older Women Movement but others in the sector. This group is working collaboratively with government and non-government partners to monitor the program's implementation and initiative outcomes. It also means women with lived experience are informing government on the best approaches to achieving the best housing outcomes for older women in Queensland.

The second is a specialised housing and support hub offering face-to-face and virtual contact with professional staff, including outreach support, volunteer peer support from people with lived experience, community awareness and advocacy. The third pillar is a review of existing housing and homelessness service offerings. This will assess whether they meet the needs of older women and are coordinated and accessible and place older women as a priority group for access to housing and homelessness services.

The fourth pillar is to create more housing options through better planning. My department continues to work collaboratively across government to explore opportunities to improve planning settings that grow the supply of social and affordable housing and generate better outcomes for older women. For the final pillar, we are allocating a further \$8 million to the design and construction of two projects as proof of concept for new social and affordable housing developments for older women.

We are committed to delivering social and affordable housing that meets the needs of older Queensland women. That means building more homes and backing this in with practical support for older women in need of housing certainty.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We will now move to the deputy chair for his next question.

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the shadow minister.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, this is my last question on figures. What I am trying to do is compare apples with apples, if you like. My calculations say, from the figures you have given me this morning, that had the audit not taken place and had the reduction not taken place there would now be 33,833 people on the social housing register. That is at least a 10 per cent increase in real terms of demand in this last 12 months. Do you agree with my calculations?

Ms ENOCH: Through the chair: the audit did take place, as it does every year apart from when COVID was on.

Mr MANDER: Point of order—

CHAIR: Member, is your question directed to the director-general?

Mr MANDER: I did say that.

CHAIR: I call the director-general.

Ms O'Connor: A couple of things: I have described the usual ebb and flow of the social housing register. People come off, people come on. During COVID, the normal process to go through and cleanse the register of people who are uncontactable, whose circumstances have changed or who no longer needed social housing did not occur for good reason because housing stability and security was

our primary objective at that time. So we resumed this processes, and I did speak to you last year, member, in answer to another question to say to you we were engaged in a very active process of ringing people. We continued with that work. That work would have happened whether the Auditor-General did his audit or not. I am very pleased that he did the audit because there are other things that he has suggested which may help us to further sharpen the social housing register. I also advised, member, at the beginning of your questioning about the social housing register that we will publish the information in September once we have validated it, once we have cleansed it and made sure that it is de-identified. Within that you will be able to ascertain who has come off the register and who has come onto the register in terms of numbers.

Mr MANDER: It was going to be my last question, but you have now caused me to ask you another question, Director-General. You did mention a figure of 27,430 households as at 30 June this year, is that correct?

Ms O'Connor: 27,437 households, member, as at 30 June 2022.

Mr MANDER: That is correct. That is up from 24,429 which is the figure less the 21 per cent, so that is a 12 per cent increase in demand for social housing over the year. That is fine. I just wanted to make sure that we can come to that.

Ms ENOCH: No, that is incorrect. Point of order, Chair. I believe the member is trying to mislead the committee.

Mr MANDER: What are you trying to hide, Minister? There has been an extra demand on social housing, has there not?

Ms ENOCH: Sorry!

CHAIR: Excuse me! Order! A reminder to all members present today that comments will be directed through the chair. There will be no personal attacks. I will hear the point of order in silence.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. I believe that the member is trying to mislead the committee with the figures. The Director-General has been very clear about normal business-as-usual practices, and there is a net decline in the number of households on the social housing register this year compared to last year. Last year we indicated that there had been somewhat of a stabilising with an eight per cent increase and now we see a decline this year.

Mr MANDER: Point of order, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, member. Member, I ask that you rephrase your question to the director-general and I am sure the director-general will be responsive.

Mr MANDER: The clarity again was about the minister using government time, not our time, thank you.

Ms ENOCH: Point of order.

Mr MANDER: I have asked the question. I am happy to move on, thank you, Chair. Minister, you have mentioned on countless occasions, and you have done it again today, about the so-called \$2.9 billion investment in social housing. We all know that \$1 billion of that is the Housing Investment Fund. Minister, would you agree that it is misleading to say that that is a billion dollars investment in social housing making people believe that that billion dollars is directly going into the construction of social housing?

CHAIR: Before I call the minister, member, I ask you to rephrase the question, for a couple of reasons: one, it is a hypothetical and, two, you are seeking an opinion. I ask you to rephrase the question, please.

Mr MANDER: Minister, how many years will it take for the return on investment from the Housing Investment Fund to reach \$1 billion?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for his interest in the Housing Investment Fund. It is the first of its kind in Queensland. It is managed by Queensland Treasury and any questions with regards to the management of the Housing Investment Fund should have been presented to the appropriate estimates hearing. The Queensland Housing Investment Fund is managed by Queensland Treasury. However, what I will say is that the investment fund—\$1 billion—is the first of its kind in Queensland, mirrored by the fact that we now have a Labor federal government that has also committed a \$10 billion housing investment fund which will see 30,000 new social and affordable homes commenced across the country. That is an investment approach that allows the drawdown of funding every year to ensure that there is more social and affordable housing being commenced and built over the forward years. The

Housing Investment Fund itself is committed to delivering 3,600 new social home commencements over the next few years till 30 June 2025. As I have said, the Housing Investment Fund is managed by Treasury, and any further questions about the treatment of that fund should have been presented to the appropriate estimates hearing.

Mr MANDER: Minister, how much money from the investment fund has your department budgeted for to use in the construction of new houses over the next five years?

Ms ENOCH: Again, I thank the member for the question. The management of the Housing Investment Fund is managed by Queensland Treasury and it is a similar modelling that you would see in other states where they have a similar investment fund. Our Housing Investment Fund is the first of its kind in Queensland. I welcome that fund. It presents part of a record investment, funding that is held by Queensland Treasury to be able to drawn down on for social and affordable homes.

The Treasurer was able to announce just recently 1,200 new social and affordable homes that will be commenced as part of a partnership with the Brisbane Housing Company, for instance, and they will continue to do that work. However, what is anticipated from the Housing Investment Fund to be able to commence 3,600 new social and affordable homes is \$160 million over four years. That is what is anticipated from the returns, and it provides part of our commitment to seeing some 10,000 new social and affordable homes commenced under our strategy.

This is building more homes through this record investment. This is on the back of the fact that we inherited a social housing portfolio that had a net loss of 428—a net loss. Not only did we have to build those back and stabilise the social housing portfolio, we had to build a strategy that actually enabled us to think innovatively about building more social housing in this state. Our housing strategy, over its 10 years, through this investment and through this innovative treatment through the Queensland Treasury, will see some 10,000 social and affordable homes added to our stock. Last year my department alone, through our QuickStarts, and other programs, worked very hard to ensure that we had exceeded our target for commencements. 832 is what we were able to commence which is astounding.

Mr MANDER: Point of order, Chair. If the minister, is finished, it is no longer relevant.

Ms ENOCH: So rude.

CHAIR: Thank you, member. I understand—

Mr MANDER: Asking questions is rude, is it?

CHAIR: Order!

Mr MANDER: Being under scrutiny is rude, is it?

CHAIR: Order! Member, I remind you that—

Mr MANDER: I was responding to an interjection, Chair.

CHAIR: No, member. Do not interrupt me. When I call order I expect order in the chamber. Member, ask your next question.

Mr MANDER: Minister, on a return of \$40 million a year it will take 25 years for you to be able to say that a billion dollars has been invested in social housing. It is clearly misleading when you say that \$2.9 billion is invested in social housing. Do you agree with that, Minister?

CHAIR: Member, could I ask again that you please rephrase your question so that it does not contain inferences and imputations. Could you shorten your question in terms of the preamble and think about the clarity of your question.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, Chair. I will move to another one. I want to talk to you about your proven track record, which you have mentioned this morning. In 2017 your government announced the Queensland Housing Strategy. It came with \$1.8 billion and a promise of 200 homes built each year for the first five years. Fast-forward to today, five years later, and there has been a net increase in social housing properties of less than a thousand, despite the social housing waiting list ballooning. How can you have any credibility? How can Queenslanders believe a word you say about the promises you make about investment when you consider this record?

CHAIR: Member, the question was very good up until that last statement. Could I just ask please that you withdraw the personal comments and that you ask the clarifying question at the end of your preamble?

Mr MANDER: I withdraw the comments that you refer to. Minister, how can Queenslanders believe the promises you make when you consider that you have not kept your promises from the past?

CHAIR: Member, could you please rephrase your question to depersonalise the context—

Mr MANDER: With respect, Chair, the minister has spoken about her track record. I am questioning that track record where promises were made five years ago and those promises have not been kept. These are the department's own records. I am asking: how can Queenslanders trust this minister when her promises have not been kept in the past?

CHAIR: Thank you, member. I will allow the minister to answer the question as she sees fit.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. Honestly, this is quite a remarkable question from the member for Everton, who oversaw a net decrease of 428 social housing dwellings whilst he was the minister for housing. This is the same person who, when he was the minister for housing, looked to—

Mr MANDER: This is 2022. The estimates are about your performance, no-one else's.

CHAIR: Order, member. Again, member, I have cautioned you about directing your comments through the chair. I also caution you about interjecting. You have asked the question, albeit a long one. I now call the minister to respond.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. Given the member's quite personal attack against me, it is right to understand that against a particular—

Mr MANDER: Point of order. I take personal offence at that and I ask it to be withdrawn.

Ms ENOCH: I withdraw.

CHAIR: Thank you. Minister, if you could continue and refer to the question that was asked.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. As I have already said and put on record, since the Palaszczuk government came to office in 2015, again, against a backdrop of a net decrease of 428 social housing dwellings—there were 428 fewer social dwellings in Queensland when the member for Everton was the housing minister. That is the backdrop. Since the Palaszczuk government came to office in 2015 we have commenced 4,882 social houses and we have completed 3,917 social homes. We continue to work to ensure that we are commencing and completing projects. This is against a backdrop, remember, of 428 fewer social homes from the LNP. This is against the backdrop of a 90 per cent decrease in construction under the former LNP minister, the member for Everton, who now comes in here and asks questions about track records. This is against a backdrop of zero commencements—

Mr MANDER: Imagine if the Logan Renewal Initiative had not been cancelled by your government.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, I now formally warn you about the interjecting. You have asked the question. The minister is being responsive. Minister?

Ms ENOCH: This is the backdrop to the housing portfolio that the Palaszczuk government inherited. As I have said, since 2015 this government has commenced 4,882 social homes, we have completed 3,917 and we continue to exceed our targets, as I have already said numerous times. Last year my department had a target of 727 new commencements. We have exceeded that—832 were commenced last year—and we will continue to work hard to meet our targets and exceed them where possible.

We are ensuring that the social housing portfolio fits the actual demand. We know there is a demand for more one- and two-bedroom units and we are doing that work. That is why we continue to see these completions and why we continue to see these commencements, even though we began with the backdrop of a complete abandonment of social housing, I feel, from the member for Everton.

Mr MANDER: Minister, you have stated on numerous occasions that you have welcomed the findings of the Queensland audit report. It is one thing to welcome them. Do you take full responsibility for the failings that the Queensland Audit Office detailed in its report?

CHAIR: Member for Everton, I thank you for your question. Could you—and I will help you—remove the word 'failings'? The question as asked contains an imputation. If you could remove the word 'failings' and reword your question, I am sure the minister will be happy to respond.

Mr MANDER: Minister, do you take responsibility for the negative outcomes that the Auditor-General identified in his report?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Of course, the Auditor-General himself in his report acknowledged that there are incredible challenges for Queensland—challenges that we are seeing right across the country. The housing system has been under incredible pressure. As I have said, it is not unique to social housing or to Queensland.

During COVID there was a number of particular practices of the department that lay dormant, as you would expect, to ensure that people were able to be secure and stay secure and in place in their properties. Everything from the management of the social housing register et cetera in terms of making contact with people with regard to those sorts of aspects was, of course, put to one side while we focused on people's safety and their security to remain in situ. As the restrictions started to lift, the department began that work again and, as you have heard already, started canvassing some 98 per cent of those on the social housing register, for instance. Of course, we are reinstating face-to-face contact with those tenants who are in our social housing dwellings to do the audits in terms of maintenance et cetera that we were unable to do because we could not have physical contact during COVID. All of those things were able to be brought back into practice as business as usual in what is now a new world order, of course. That very much demonstrated further pressures on the system. There was work that the department was already doing to rectify that.

The Auditor-General's report came at the right time. I have welcomed that report. The department has accepted all eight of its recommendations and they are working hard to ensure those recommendations are implemented and delivered by the end of 2023. Of course, all of the impacts that we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic—the population growth in Queensland, the record low rental vacancy rates, the increasing rental housing and house sale prices, the critical shortages in building materials and labour and the severe weather and flooding events over the last couple of years—have played a part. With the pressures that we are seeing right across our state and, in fact, across the country, we now need the social housing register to be the sharpest instrument that it can possibly be to ensure we are meeting the needs of the most vulnerable who are seeking housing solutions from the department.

I welcome the Auditor-General's recommendations. The department has accepted all eight of those recommendations, and they are working to implement those recommendations by the end of 2023. As I have said numerous times, I want the social housing register and our management of that register to be the sharpest it possibly can be. We need it to be right now. Things have changed a great deal over the last two years, and the pressures continue to mount and compound. There are multiple issues that we are seeing right across the housing system and social housing has not been immune to those issues.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the SDS, will the minister outline how the Palaszczuk government is investing in housing solutions in First Nations communities across Queensland?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Cook for the question. I recognise that the member for Cook is the member who has the largest number of discrete Indigenous communities and local governments in her electorate, so I know that this issue is of particular interest to her.

The Palaszczuk government is investing in housing solutions in First Nations communities across Queensland. In the 2022-23 Queensland state budget we have invested \$101.3 million to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland. We are investing a further \$21.7 million in 2022-23 to deliver outcomes as a part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019-23. This includes a \$3.2 million investment to support the recently established Indigenous community housing peak body, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland, which is all part of a \$5.5 million investment over five years to support broader sector development. This initiative has been an important part of supporting all of our Indigenous community housing organisations across Queensland. This peak body has been sought after for many years. I was very proud to provide funding through that investment and, of course, to officially open that organisation. That board has been working hard over the last 12 months to ensure the work that they are able to do to support Indigenous community housing organisations is in place.

We are working alongside local councils very closely to strengthen joint decision-making and enable community-led responses to provide appropriately sized, safe and secure housing. Earlier this year, I was pleased to attend the Local Government Association Queensland's Indigenous Leaders Forum in Cairns. I have attended that forum on numerous occasions now. The forum provided an opportunity to agree on shared housing priorities and commitments for remote communities over the coming year. We agreed to continue working in partnership to deliver the \$40 million interim remote capital program and the \$105 million forward remote capital program. The \$40 million Remote Interim Capital Program is expected to deliver 54 new homes, 34 extensions to existing homes and to create 40 new allotments for social housing. The \$105 million forward remote capital program is expected to deliver 154 new homes, 20 extensions to existing homes and to create 122 new allotments for social housing.

Last year, we delivered 21 new homes, 20 extensions to existing homes and 15 new allotments to communities including Aurukun, Hope Vale, Doomadgee and Yarrabah. We are also working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland to deliver local housing action plans. Local Housing Action Plans identify unique housing challenges and priorities in each community and are used as a planning tool to guide culturally appropriate and community-led housing investment. I advise the committee that draft local housing plans have been developed for 17 remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We will continue to engage with councils through the Local Housing Action Plan process to refine local housing priorities.

The Palaszczuk government is also focussed on increasing home ownership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland. I can advise the committee that 180 First Nations households now own, or are in the process of owning, their home through the Queensland government's Remote Home Ownership Program, which is a great outcome. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan and the Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan is delivering more housing outcomes for First Nations Queenslanders.

CHAIR: Minister, would you please advise how the Palaszczuk government is supporting the operation of a network of funded neighbourhood and community centres across Queensland?

Ms ENOCH: Thank you very much for the question; it is an incredibly important question. The past few years have demonstrated that neighbourhood and community centres are really the cornerstone of so many communities across Queensland. NCCs, as they are often known, have played an absolutely essential role in supporting community recovery from natural disasters in places like Maryborough, Laidley, Gatton and across the river in West End. This year we saw multiple flooding events, in some places like Maryborough, multiple times in a matter of months. I have also seen firsthand the work of NCCs responding to social isolation and loneliness and supporting healthy communities through programs as diverse as bootscooting in Goodna, community gardening in Marlin Coast and art groups in New Farm.

The government is proudly boosting support to neighbourhood and community centres across Queensland. I am very pleased to say that the 2022-23 Queensland state budget includes a record investment in NCCs across the state, with the greatest single increase to operational funding the NCC sector has ever seen. The Queensland government is investing a further \$115.8 million in NCCs over the next four years. We are boosting operational funding to state government funded NCCs by \$51.8 million over four years, lifting the base minimum operational funding from \$124,000 per annum to \$230,000 per annum. In addition to the significant boost to base operational funding—in fact, the biggest boost to base operational funding ever—this budget also supports a range of other key supports. It includes \$9.3 million over four years to continue and expand the successful neighbourhood and community centre's connect worker initiative which employs 20 workers in areas of greatest need.

The government has also committed \$1.2 million over four years to fund the peak body for neighbourhood and community centres in Queensland. Neighbourhood Centres Queensland are lifting their per annum funding to \$460,000. For those government funded NCCs operating from premises not owned or managed by the state government, a supplement of \$20,000 per annum will be provided to contribute to rent and associated premises costs. The government is also backing our commitment to Queensland communities with a \$39 million capital investment in NCCs over the forward estimates. This will support projected new builds, as well as replacements and upgrades to existing NCCs. This commitment builds on our proud record of investing in neighbourhood and community centre infrastructure.

I recently joined the member for Rockhampton to announce that the Palaszczuk government will build a brand new neighbourhood and community centre in Rockhampton—the first state funded NCC in Rocky. We are also constructing a purpose-built replacement for the Bowen Neighbourhood Centre. The department is partnering with stakeholders including Logan City Council, the Department of Education, Lendlease and Brisbane Catholic Education to develop an integrated social services infrastructure model at Yarrabilba. The precinct will include a new neighbourhood and community centre funded by the department, and I was pleased to join the member for Logan to turn the first sod on that site at the end of last year.

A new permanent home for the Yeronga Community Centre is being established through our government's redevelopment of the old Yeronga TAFE site. In 2021 I was pleased to open brand new or replacement neighbourhood and community centres in Kallangur, at the Philip Street precinct in Gladstone and at Wilsonton in Toowoomba, and of course I look forward to the opening of the new centre on Thursday Island. We also committed \$1.9 million towards a replacement purpose-built new centre for the existing Atherton neighbourhood and community centre.

The government is very proud of these investments in Queensland's NCCs. They are the cornerstone of our communities, with hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders seeking assistance at our funded NCCs every year, including people experiencing domestic and family violence, people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, people experiencing social isolation and loneliness, First Nations Queenslanders, people with disability, people impacted by disasters and of course families experiencing financial stress. I thank the chair in particular and the committee for the strong interest that committee members from all parties have shown in the vital work of neighbourhood and community centres.

Mr SKELTON: Will the minister advise the committee what support is being provided to the social community services sector to build capacity and deliver strong communities through funding support to sector peak body organisations?

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, member for Nicklin. Peak bodies are a very important part of the sector, being able to support various community organisations to serve the communities they work in. We have a very proud track record of supporting our social and community services sectors to develop services for vulnerable Queenslanders statewide. Peak organisations are important conduits between community services sector organisations, clients and government. In 2022-23 the Queensland government has committed \$3 million in funding to a wide range of peak organisations and industry bodies. This includes \$1.6 million to Queensland Council of Social Service, \$497,000 to Volunteering Queensland, \$460,000 to Neighbourhood Centres Queensland and \$150,000 each to Queensland Meals on Wheels, Queensland Men's Shed Association and the Financial Counsellors' Association of Queensland.

QCOSS aims to provide leadership across the community services sector and acts as a conduit between government and the sector. My department partners with QCOSS to build the capability and sustainability of the community services sector, build policy networks and engagement platforms, and share research and information on government priorities, policies and services. For example, during Queensland's flood disasters earlier this year QCOSS ensured the community services sector had access to up-to-date information about disaster assistance and recovery for flood-affected communities.

We have committed more than \$2.5 million over five years from January 2022 to Volunteering Queensland, which collaborates with all levels of government, volunteer support organisations, the education sector and corporate groups to realise the social, cultural and economic benefits of volunteering. We also fund Volunteering Queensland to manage the Emergency Volunteering Community Response to Extreme Weather—a really important part of the volunteering aspect of supporting people who have been impacted by extreme weather events. That emergency volunteering response to extreme weather is known as the EV Crew. The EV Crew plays a vital role in coordinating that allocation of volunteers in response to disasters. Volunteering Queensland supported 13 local councils in affected areas, referring more than 6,000 volunteers to assist with the clean-up, for instance, during the flooding events. Volunteering Queensland was also funded to set up the Care Army and mobilise its volunteers to support isolated seniors and help out at vaccination centres as part of Queensland's response to COVID-19. The Care Army has continued to provide volunteers to assist community organisations in supporting vulnerable Queenslanders.

Queensland Meals on Wheels is the professional body for Meals on Wheels services, providing training for staff and volunteers and support services to comply with legislative requirements such as food safety standards. The Financial Counsellors' Association of Queensland is the professional body for Queensland financial counsellors, providing resources and professional development support to financial counsellors and agencies that assist vulnerable Queenslanders experiencing financial difficulty. I am pleased to advise that the 2022-23 budget includes an additional commitment of \$1.2 million over four years to boost funding of the peak body for neighbourhood and community centres. Of course, that peak body has been working with NCCs for many years and provides leadership and capability uplift to the sector, and we know that those NCCs are such an important part of our community.

This government continues to work in partnership with neighbourhood and community centres to ensure more people can be connected to the support and services they need in their local communities. That is why we have that record additional funding investment of \$18.77 million in neighbourhood and community centres across the state. We will see the operational base funding of those neighbourhood and community centres boosted to at least \$230,000 per annum, which is a fantastic outcome for neighbourhood and community centres. We continue to look forward to partnering with the peak bodies that support all of these important community organisations that do such an incredible job in our community.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair?

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the shadow minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Madam Chair and committee, for having me here today. Welcome, Minister, senior staff and other members of the committee as well as staff. My first question is to the director-general, and my reference is the Integrity Services Unit at page 55 of the annual report. I wonder if you could advise the committee how many referrals for corruption or misconduct the department received in 2021-22 and the outcomes of those, broken down into corruption and misconduct and then via sections of the department please.

Ms O'Connor: Thank you very much, member, for that question. I will ask that Deputy Director-General Matthew Nye, who heads strategy and corporate services, come to the table.

CHAIR: Thank you, Director-General.

Mr Nye: Could I please get you to repeat the question?

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, sure. It is really about the global and broken-down figures of referrals for corruption and misconduct received through the Integrity Services Unit for 2021-22 and then the outcomes broken down by parts of the department—in other words, as has happened in other areas such as seniors and disabilities where it can be broken down to 37 corruption matters, 108 misconduct and that sort of thing and then broken down by sections of the department if possible, please.

Mr Nye: Sure. In 2021, 27 matters were received by the department in the Integrity Services Unit. Of those, eight were assessed as corrupt conduct matters. Five were from housing and homelessness, two were from our digital group and one was from Arts Queensland. As at 30 June 2022, two complaints remain for assessment pending further investigation or outcomes. The eight assessed as corrupt conduct involved a total of 33 allegations. Some 85 per cent of those allegations related to inappropriate workplace behaviours ranging from inappropriate communication to workplace harassment. As at 30 June 2022, eight of the allegations of those 33 allegations were substantiated, four allegations were partially substantiated, 15 allegations were unsubstantiated and four allegations are currently under investigation, with a further two referred to Human Resources.

Mr BENNETT: My question is to the director-general. I refer to capital statements and pages 33 and 34, but specifically the Wide Bay and the investment that has been mentioned here today, the \$177 million over the next four years. Could you help me with the approximate \$13 million that has been allocated in the capital statements and what that will equate to in new builds in social housing, please?

Ms O'Connor: Member, can I clarify? Are you talking about what we intend to build in Wide Bay?

Mr BENNETT: The budgetary figure of \$12,927,000. I appreciate that has been talked about over a four-year period. I am trying to equate what that would look like in numbers on the ground.

Ms O'Connor: Thank you, member, for that question. Those figures about Wide Bay Burnett include a four-year target under QuickStarts Queensland of 175 dwellings and I am pleased to say that we have, in the 2021-22 year, commenced 35 of those.

Mr BENNETT: I have a quick one because we are running out of time. Budget Paper 3, capital statements: I go on record again, if I may, about the neighbourhood centres and what a great initiative they are, but Agnes Water with 6,000 residents, can we please consider Agnes Water as an investment for a capital project in the future? It is a statement more than a question, I guess, but I am on record.

CHAIR: One of the benefits of being a deputy chair, Deputy Chair, perhaps. Can I turn to you for a question?

Mr BENNETT: My last question before I hand to the member for Maiwar: Minister, when the draft State Archivist report into the mangocube affair was sent to the ministerial office on 22 September 2017, did you read the report?

Ms ENOCH: First of all, through the chair, some guidance. We are talking about a whole other portfolio. I believe that I can only really talk to this portfolio now.

CHAIR: That is right, Minister, you are correct. The question should have been directed during the estimates process associated with that particular department. I am very conscious of time. I did promise the member for Maiwar—now the member for South Brisbane—a question.

Dr MacMAHON: My question is for the minister. Minister, the Queensland Audit Office report states that the 6,365 builds planned to commence by 2025 will help increase social housing supply, however, it will not be enough to keep up with increasing demand. Why does the Palaszczuk government not have a plan to keep up with demand?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Obviously we are not the only player in this space. We are investing a record amount of funding. It is the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing in Queensland's history. We are also very pleased to see now an Albanese Labor government at the federal level where we have seen actual commitment to social and affordable housing at that level.


What we saw previous to the election from the former LNP federal government was a stripping of funding from our social housing portfolio. It was about \$100 million from our agreement over that period. From my experience, there was very little appetite to work with the state on increasing the amount of social and affordable housing. I am very pleased to see that the Albanese Labor government has committed that \$10 billion Housing Investment Fund and that that will see 30,000 social and affordable homes across the country.

Certainly from the conversations that I have already had with the new housing minister, it has been a breath of fresh air to actually have some kind of collaboration happening. It was fantastic to meet with all of the housing ministers recently where we saw every single housing minister across the country highlight the challenges that we are all facing in this space. But, of course, we are under the same constraints that every other state and territory is under. We have had mass migration into the state, we continue to see supply chain issues.

Just yesterday I turned the sod on another 37-unit complex on the Gold Coast where I was speaking to the builders and they were raising concerns about being able to get concrete. This is a story that is happening right across the state: access to supplies of concrete, timber trusses et cetera, et cetera. All of those things are providing extra challenges, compounding challenges. But, of course, we continue to look for interim short-term measures as well as getting that build underway, ensuring that not only are we building as many as we can out of our record investment, but that we will get our fair share out of the federal government's Housing Investment Fund as well and I think that is a really important part of the equation going forward.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time for questions has expired. The committee will now adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 11 am with the examination of the estimates of the arts portfolio.

Proceedings suspended from 10.45 am to 11.00 am.

 **CHAIR:** Good morning, everyone. The hearing is resumed. I welcome back the minister and officials. I also welcome Dr McMahon and Dr Rowan, who are visiting members of our committee this morning. The committee will now examine the estimates for the arts portfolio. I call the deputy chair and member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: Thank you, Chair. I defer to the shadow minister.

Dr ROWAN: Thank you, Chair and Minister, and also to the departmental representatives here today. My first question is to the director-general, with reference to page 35 of the capital statement and the new performing arts venue at QPAC. Last year \$84.2 million was budgeted for the 2021-22 financial year to be spent on the new performing arts venue and this year's budget papers reveal that just over \$32 million was spent. Director-General, can you explain this apparent underspend of more than 60 per cent?

Ms O'Connor: The approved NPAV project budget is \$175 million. As you know, the Queensland government is responsible for contributing \$150 million of that and QPAC will contribute the other \$25 million. In 2021 the total project expenditure was \$32 million and that is largely due to adverse weather and other delays. As you know, member, we have had two major urban floods in Brisbane. The car parks around that area were totally inundated and with every other building in the area there were impacts felt. I think that would explain why there have been delays in the building.

Dr ROWAN: Director-General, last year you advised this committee that the new performing arts venue at QPAC would have a practical completion date of around 4 January 2023. Can you advise whether the project is still on budget and is the anticipated completion date still 4 January 2023?

Ms O'Connor: I can advise that the budget is still within the same envelope, as I have just mentioned, of \$175 million. As I said last year, it is a very complex build and a very important build and it is being delivered in a very challenging environment. I have just mentioned the weather, which has played a significant part this year.

To me there are three key dates to be aware of related to the completion of the project. One is the contractual date for practical completion. The second is the managing contractor's net date for practical completion. The third is the forecast date for practical completion. I am going to step through those so that we understand what their importance is.

The contractual date for practical completion: at the end of June 2022 Lend Lease, which is constructing the new theatre, had been awarded extension-of-time claims for 24 days relating to the delays that could not reasonably be foreseen at the time of contracting. That would take us out to around 7 February 2023. You will recall last year I think I signalled around 4 January. Under the contract Lend Lease is continuing to express that date.

The net date for completion has come back as 13 November 2023. This net date, though, does not take into account future program risks and does not include any allowances for delays, risks or contingency.

Then I want to go to the final date, which is what I think will be more realistic. Given that we have had two major floods and that we have still to face next year's season, we have an executive steering committee, and I chair that committee, to consider what challenges are facing the project. That committee was advised that, while further delays were being experienced, Lend Lease considered the project was still able to be delivered. That was until recently. We had a steering committee meeting on 3 June at which point we were advised by DEPW that construction was behind and that practical completion may not occur until around mid-2024. The committee and I have asked that that be managed very carefully and that further advice come through about how that time frame could be reduced. There are some things being undertaken at the moment, including traffic rearrangements, which may help.

Dr ROWAN: Director-General, with reference to page 56 of the SDS and the Queensland Museum, as you mentioned we have had a flood this year and the outdoor Dinosaur Garden at the Queensland Museum remains closed due to flooding. Can you advise when the outdoor Dinosaur Garden will reopen and what will be the total cost of repairs to it, given its importance to families?

Ms O'Connor: I will ask the CEO of the Queensland Museum Network, Dr Jim Thompson, to come forward.

Ms ENOCH: Whilst Dr Thompson is settling in, for the benefit of the member and the committee and the—

CHAIR: Minister, just a moment, if you do not mind. Member, would you be happy for the minister to make a couple of comments or would you rather defer to—

Dr ROWAN: I think it is a point of order. It was asked of the director-general and it has been referred to the appropriate chief executive officer.

CHAIR: Yes, thank you.

Dr Thompson: The Dinosaur Garden has been closed since the floods mainly because of the damage to the soft fall in that area and the contamination of that area. It was determined that it was impossible to clean that to a necessary state. Work actually commenced this week on that. There is a number of elements of the work that we can do there. The replacement of the soft fall was about \$180,000, as an estimate. However, we are taking the opportunity, seeing that we are going to do that work now, to perhaps do some other work at the same time so it might add tens of thousands of dollars to that. It might get up to \$300,000 or \$400,000, depending on the work that we need to do. The estimated completion is the end of September or 16 September for that at this point.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, in the previous session you said you were unable to answer the member for Burnett's question about the State Archivist's report into the mangocube email saga. Minister, are you able to answer that specific question, which was: when the draft State Archivist's report into the mangocube affair was sent to your ministerial office on 22 September 2017, when did you read the report?

CHAIR: Member, I believe I have already ruled on this matter. I do not believe that this matter falls under the jurisdiction of the minister under this portfolio for this session.

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Chair. My understanding, based on your ruling and what was said in the previous session, is that this would be the most appropriate session to follow up on that question.

CHAIR: Thank you, member. Member, could you refer to the page number of the SDS?

Dr ROWAN: Page 5 of the SDS where it refers to the Queensland State Archives under 'Community Services'.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, member. Minister, I will allow the question, but I will—

Ms ENOCH: Just your guidance, Chair, though. We are talking about another parliamentary sitting term. I am happy to talk about what has happened in this term, but the question is with regards to a whole other term of government.

CHAIR: Thank you for your point of order, Minister. As I indicated, I will allow the question but I will allow your discretion in terms of the extent to which you answer the question and its relevance. Minister, I ask that you respond to the question as you see fit, and then we will move on to the next question.

Ms ENOCH: Okay. Thank you, Chair. I thank the member for the question. I will speak to this term. As the member would know, the report to which the member is referring was forwarded to my office on the eve of caretaker. There were a whole heap of challenges in all of that. In this term since I have had responsibilities, there have been a number of measures that have been put in place, including the fact that there is an independent review now underway with regards to the Public Records Act. That commenced on 27 May. We were able to appoint the Hon. Justice John Byrne to lead that independent review of the Public Records Act. Of course, as the member would know, Justice Byrne has an extensive legal career including: appointments to the Supreme Court; and serving as a member of the Council of Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration. He is very well regarded and obviously will do a great job.

The review of the act is intended to ensure that it meets community expectation and delivers public information and record management best practice. As the member would know, there have been a great deal of changes in terms of social media, the way that we interact as a community and globally. Of course, Justice Byrne will be looking at all of those aspects to ensure that the Public Records Act—that of course had not been reviewed since it was first brought into legislation—has an opportunity to better reflect what the general public would expect in this day and age. Of course, the McKenna Report was provided with regards to some of the elements that the member is speaking to. Of course, that resolved all of those issues.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Deputy Chair?

Mr BENNETT: Yes. Back to the member for Moggill.

Dr ROWAN: Chair, can I just ask a further question of the minister? I just wanted to know exactly when she read the report? It was forwarded to the office on 22 September. The election was in November. I am not sure when caretaker specifically began, but when did the minister read the report if and when it was forwarded on 22 September?

Ms ENOCH: Again, I am speaking to another term of parliament, which is very unusual to have to answer.

Dr Robinson interjected.

Mr BENNETT: Point of order, please, Chair?

CHAIR: Order! Was that the member for Oodgeroo? Member, I would caution you around the interjection of a member. Your deputy chair had a point of order?

Mr BENNETT: I take the minister's point about talking to this term, but we have had a whole morning where she has referenced things that happened seven or eight years ago. Archives are historical by nature and the sanctity of those documents is really important. I do ask the chair to encourage that the answer be given about whether the minister read the report in 2017.

CHAIR: Member, I do appreciate your point of order. Whilst the minister did preface what she was going to say, as you alluded I do ask and I was aware that the minister was coming to the answer.

Ms ENOCH: Again, Chair, for the benefit of the committee: I am speaking to another term of parliament. However, I was advised that a draft report had been sent inappropriately to my office and that that letter had been recalled by the then State Archivist, acknowledging the need for further amendments. I did not read the report at that time because it had been recalled by the State Archivist at the time. Of course, since coming into the portfolio in this term of government, there has been work undertaken by Justice McKenna. Of course, I have had the opportunity to read those materials that Justice McKenna was able to produce.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member?

Dr ROWAN: Thank you, Chair. Director-General, with reference to page 10 of the SDS and staffing, the interim Coaldrake Review identified that a director-general was keeping information from their minister to provide plausible deniability. Was this in reference to yourself as director-general?

Ms O'Connor: I thank the member for that question. My answer is: absolutely not.

CHAIR: Thank you, Director-General. Deputy Chair?

Mr BENNETT: We might go to the member for South Brisbane.

CHAIR: The member for South Brisbane?

Dr MacMAHON: Thank you, Chair. My question is for the minister. The Boggo Road PDA has highlighted opportunities for the Boggo Road Jail for activation events and community uses. Has the department investigated opportunities for arts and creative uses that respect the history of the jail?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question and for her interest in the arts and culture in Queensland. Of course, we were able to launch a 10-year road map for arts and culture in Queensland. Certainly, some of that has been about arts infrastructure across the state. We have just been talking obviously about the new performing arts venue, which everybody is very excited about, that is experiencing the same delays as every other major project across the state. We only have to look at Queen's Wharf which has just announced that its opening is delayed due to the major weather events. We have seen the Rockhampton Art Gallery open as well. That was a great investment. Of course, we are looking for all opportunities to activate arts and cultural experiences across the state.

In terms of Boggo Road, I will ask the department to look at those opportunities, but that has not been flagged as a major opportunity right now. I will certainly get the department to have a look at whether there is an opportunity to enhance arts experiences in that precinct. My own experience there is that it has been involved more to do with the science and innovation space, but I know that the deputy director-general has met about the precinct. We will continue to look at opportunities wherever we can to explore arts expansion.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for South Brisbane?

Dr MacMAHON: Thank you. Minister, what investigations have the government or the department done into mainstreaming accessibility for arts venues—not just physical accessibility but information, infrastructure and technology for sensory accessibility as well?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Certainly, one of the strong suits of Arts Queensland and the work that we have been doing under our road map is to ensure that we are building our capacity and capability in terms of accessibility. We are seeing that right across the work that we do. I might bring forward the deputy director-general with regards to that to speak in more detail on it. We can be very proud of the diversity that we have built into our road map—everything from the work we are doing in regards to First Nations people through to an all-abilities approach to ensuring that arts is something that connects us all and helps us all to prosper into the future. I will bring forward the deputy director-general.

Ms Herring: I thank the member for the question. I think that Dr MacMahon actually corresponded with the minister about accessibility issues. It is something very important in the arts.

When we look forward to 2032 and the Paralympic Games, I think we have a remarkable opportunity to grow access to the arts for all abilities. It is something that we think about in everything that we program and that we are doing. It is something that I know the minister, Clare and I are passionate about. We fund a number of organisations in the disability space like Access Arts and Crossroads Arts. We fund a number of individual projects through our Queensland Arts Showcase Program. Wilbur the Optical Whale you would have seen when it was at Metro Arts last year. It is a big area for our arts statutory bodies. The CEOs, who are here, can all talk about how they make their experience accessible across the board for people with sensory processing disabilities or autism spectrum disorder.

I think the other part of your question also deals with live streaming. When we are talking about access, there is also the way to get the arts to people through live streaming and digital platforms. The new performing arts venue will have a big commitment to live streaming. It is amazing that we can build that in now. It is a unique opportunity. Separately, both our Centre for Contemporary Arts, Bulmba-ja, in Cairns and the Judith Wright Arts Centre have invested in live streaming so that all artists can present their works to people right across the state.

Ms ENOCH: I will add to that as the question was originally asked of me. I am advised that the Queensland Theatre has Auslan interpretation, for instance. There are modified performances for sensory concerns at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. There are programs at QAGOMA. There are some practical applications of what you were asking about in your question. The detail that you have been provided by the deputy director-general gives you some more insight.

Mr SKELTON: Will the minister please advise how the Palaszczuk government's *Creative together: a 10-year roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland* is supporting the growth of Queensland's arts and cultural sector as we head towards the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games?

Ms ENOCH: As the arts minister, I am incredibly proud of *Creative together: a 10-year roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland*. It is absolutely transforming Queensland communities, and that is its aim. Sustain was the first action plan of Creative Together. It was underpinned by the \$22.5 million Arts and Cultural Recovery Package and very much focused on sustaining Queensland's

arts sector through the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The arts were very hard hit as a result of the necessary restrictions that came about from the pandemic. Key actions and investment created over 10,000 employment opportunities and supported the presentation of COVID-safe cultural experiences to engage audiences of more than two million, which was fantastic.

I am pleased to announce today that the government is releasing Grow 2022-2026—the second action plan of Creative Together. Grow 2022-2026 will include a sharpened focus on realising the Palaszczuk government's commitment to Path to Treaty and ensuring Queensland embraces the significant opportunities presented by the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The action plan is supported with \$50 million of new money invested over four years, bringing the total new arts portfolio investment in Creative Together to almost \$80 million since the road map was launch in 2020. The \$50 million investment will activate new initiatives, events and experiences to connect artists with audiences, boost the creative workforce, enhance the delivery of local art experiences that drive social and economic outcomes in Queensland communities, and accelerate the growth of Queensland's arts, cultural and creative sector. Importantly, this funding will support Queensland's incredibly talented artists and arts organisations to raise their ambitions as we prepare to welcome the world in 2032.

Grow will underpin new approaches and partnerships to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, including increased opportunities for training artists and arts workers in key technical and venue skills. We will redesign schools touring to ensure young people in regional and remote Queensland have access to stimulating arts and cultural activities, with investment of \$800,000 per annum over the next four years to align touring activities with the school curriculum and foster social and community cohesion.

Our Creative Business Champions program—a free program supported by the Queensland government which mentored more than 800 Queensland artists and art workers in 2021—will continue to build art sector knowledge and capacity with the addition in 2022-23 of a touring specialist adviser, supporting employment and career pathways.

Grow will introduce flexible funding models to elevate First Nations arts across the state and to further share the stories of First Nations peoples, commission new works and build robust supply chains that will deliver economic outcomes for First Nations peoples and communities. New approaches to realise community-led priorities will bolster the Queensland government's commitment to work closely with First Nations communities to ensure locally-led investment in priorities that will have a positive and long-term impact.

Grow will develop placed based cultural tourism experiences that deliver economic impacts and create employment, supporting talented Queensland artists and organisations to make and present their work in Queensland and to export Queensland-made work to international markets. This will help Queensland embrace the opportunities of Brisbane 2032, profiling our creative talent and delivering new and enhanced cultural infrastructure and experiences for all Queenslanders.

Our arts and cultural sector is emerging from the most significant disruption the sector has experienced in generations. Through Grow 2022-2026, the Palaszczuk government is backing our artists and organisations as we prepare to welcome the world and place our diverse arts and cultures front and centre in 2032.

Ms LUI: Will the minister please advise the committee how the Palaszczuk government is elevating First Nations arts—one of the priorities of *Creative together: a 10-year roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland*?

Ms ENOCH: We are absolutely committed to building stronger relationships that value and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. In seeking to reframe relationships with First Nations peoples, the Queensland government envisages a more inclusive, shared future and is elevating First Nations arts as a key priority of the Creative Together 10-year road map to review and transform the state throughout arts, culture and creativity.

Key actions to date include the establishment of a First Nations Arts and Cultures Panel which has developed the draft *Cultural engagement framework: working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultures in Queensland*. This framework, to be finalised and released later this year, aims to guide respectful engagement with First Nations peoples, organisations and communities in the creation and presentation of arts and cultural work and ensure we have a shared understanding and the right resources in place.

The government is also ensuring strong representation of First Nations voices in the governance of our arts statutory bodies and arts owned companies. I can confirm that earlier this week we reached the important milestone of 25 per cent First Nation representation across the boards of our arts statutory bodies and arts owned companies, which is a fantastic milestone.

To support our aim of elevating First Nations arts, we have developed several new funding opportunities and initiatives. The new First Nations Pathways fund injects \$2.6 million over four years into five First Nations performing arts companies, delivering annual funding and capacity-building support to help strengthen their creative, strategic and economic potential. We continue our long-term support through the Backing Indigenous Arts initiative, with investment of \$2.5 million in 2021-22 for Queensland's network of Indigenous arts centres, the annual Cairns Indigenous Art Fair and other First Nations programs.

I am pleased to announce today that the Palaszczuk government is growing the network of funded Indigenous art centres, investing more than \$203,000 over two years towards the Indigenous art centre at Coen and \$210,000 over two years towards the Ration Shed Museum at Cherbourg. This important investment will support the Coen and Cherbourg communities to realise local priorities including enhancing arts practice and skills development for local artists and arts workers, improve sustainability and support for those organisations' growth ambitions. New initiatives realised through the \$22.35 million Arts and Cultural Recovery Package are supporting the ambitions of the First Nations arts sector to showcase work to larger audiences.

Seven First Nations artists and arts organisations shared almost \$400,000 through round 2 of the First Nations Commissioning Fund to develop exciting new works that will create employment opportunities and bring communities together. The First Nations Art, Craft and Design: Transforming Marketplaces program is supporting seven Queensland based First Nations artists and arts organisations, with more than \$625,000 to grow the distribution of high-quality, ethically produced visual artworks to meet current and future markets. The program will help to ensure recipients are well positioned to leverage the opportunities of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We have also introduced an innovative new model of peer assessment to review and advise on arts funding applications. This model presents First Nations peoples with a key role in decision-making related to Indigenous arts, cultures, policy investment, and aims to transition to 50 per cent First Nations representation across all assessment panels and 100 per cent representation on all dedicated First Nations funding programs. This is especially significant with \$50 million in new funding that was announced as part of the 2022-23 budget which will introduce further new initiatives to grow exceptional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing and visual arts. As we look to the future, we are committed to further growing awareness and understanding of the contributions of First Nations arts and cultures as a key pillar of Queensland's arts, cultural and creative sector.

CHAIR: Minister, will you advise how the Palaszczuk government is supporting arts and cultural events for audiences throughout Queensland through support for touring activities across the state?

Ms ENOCH: Everybody on the committee and visiting members are absolutely aware that there is no doubt that COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on arts and cultural touring not just in Queensland but nationally and globally. There are multiple stories of touring events that were cancelled, suspended and postponed as a result of necessary restrictions that were put in place to manage COVID-19. The arts have been hit very hard in that space.

However, I am pleased to advise that Queensland's art sector has responded quickly to demand from regional audiences and communities and delivered projects supported by Arts Queensland touring funds, almost doubling touring audience reach to engage 267,000 Queenslanders in 2021-22 compared with an estimated total audience of nearly 143,000 in 2020-21—clearly a huge difference in terms of some of those restrictions we saw during COVID. The fact that we have seen that rebound so rapidly is fantastic.

Queenslanders across the state continue to experience high-quality performances, visual art exhibitions and educational workshops with the Palaszczuk government's touring investment of \$2.5 million in 2021-22 which is supporting 68 touring and three artists in residency projects through programs like the Touring Queensland Fund and Touring Queensland Quick Response Fund.

Funding of nearly \$150,000 to BlakDance through the Touring Queensland Fund will deliver a Queensland tour of First Nations contemporary dance work *Silence* to communities in Maryborough, Toowoomba, Surfers Paradise, Gladstone, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns and Rockhampton, accompanied by a strong school and community engagement program.

People, Culture and Country 2022 received funding of \$20,000 through Touring Queensland Fund's artists in residency program to work with primary and secondary First Nation students to produce contemporary wearable artworks based on their cultures for display in a culminating exhibition catalogue and short video clips in Townsville, Ayr, Charters Towers, Doomadgee and Mornington Island.

In addition to our support through the Touring Queensland Fund and the Touring Queensland Quick Response Fund, the Queensland government supported Opera Queensland with an investment of \$500,000 for the 2022 Festival of Outback Opera and the creation of touring production *The Sopranos*, thrilling audiences in Longreach, Winton, Barcaldine, Blackall, Tambo and Windorah. Let me tell you it was very well received. It was strengthening partnerships with local councils to realise significant economic and social outcomes of those communities.

This investment, alongside our commitment of \$20 million over three years through the tourism portfolio for Queensland Music Festival's Queensland Music Trails, will also deliver world-class performances into communities across Queensland and have a transformational impact on the contribution of cultural tourism to local economies.

The government is also supporting the capacity of artists and organisations to deliver arts and cultural opportunities through touring with the addition in 2022-23 of a touring specialist adviser available through the Creative Business Champions free mentoring program. We are committed to ensuring regional, rural and remote schools have access to high-quality and curriculum relevant arts and cultural experiences. That is why funding is supporting more than 26,000 students through 11 arts and education touring residency programs.

We continue to see that huge investment in touring activities even further. I am pleased to announce today that 12 recipients will share in more than \$640,000 through round 4 of the Touring Queensland Fund. This includes more than \$26,000 to Townsville's Australian Festival of Chamber Music to support the festival's Winterschool Outreach Regional Tour, nearly \$95,000 to support the 2022 Mornington Island dance tour and more than \$34,000 to the Queensland Youth Orchestras to support the QYO Big Band summer tour. They are all incredibly exciting programs and something that I know all Queenslanders, of course, have a right to access as they do to incredible arts and cultural experiences in their own communities. The Palaszczuk government is investing in our artists and organisations to make this a reality.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 4 of the SDS, could you advise what support the Palaszczuk government is providing to regional communities, artists and arts organisations through the arts budget?

Ms ENOCH: One of the really important parts of the roadmap is that it is a roadmap for all of Queensland. We have a 10-year run up, if you like, to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic games. It is a time when our cultural identity will be on display to the rest of the world. Our cultural identity is more than just South-East Queensland. Our cultural identity is made up of multiple stories from across Queensland. Regional Queensland and the First Nations original stories of this state all form part of our cultural identity. We want to ensure that we are supporting the development and the showcasing of that through arts and culture and through our Creative Together 10-year roadmap.

In 2021-22 the Queensland government invested a total of \$63.6 million towards regional arts and culture. This included funding of \$1.5 million to 80 regional recipients through Arts Queensland's contestable funding programs and further investment of \$2.25 million supporting touring activity.

Our long-running partnership with regional local councils through the Regional Arts Development Fund, or RADF as many people know, saw the Queensland government invest \$2.08 million to 59 local councils in 2021-22. This investment leveraged a local government contribution for a total of \$4.38 million which helped to realise hundreds of successful projects, benefited local communities and encouraged regional access to arts and cultural experiences.

The next iteration of the Regional Arts Services Network, our innovative model for the delivery of arts and cultural services across regional Queensland, is supported with an investment of \$7.8 million over four years to 30 June 2025. Through the new model of the Regional Arts Services Network, four Queensland based service providers—Empire Theatres out of Toowoomba, Regional Development Australia Tropical North in consortium with Cook Shire Council, Topology and Central Queensland University—will help to broker partnerships and empower regions over the next four years to realise arts and cultural priorities.

Queensland government support through the Organisations Fund 2022-2025 has secured operational funding of nearly \$6.6 million for 11 regional small to medium arts applicant organisations over four years from January 2022. This includes companies as diverse as Townsville's Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Jute Theatre in Cairns and Red Ridge Interior, based in Blackall, and brings people together to participate in arts and cultural activities throughout remote Western Queensland. I note there are many members of parliament who support Red Ridge Interior, including Red Ridge the Label through their wearable art. We have also invested \$3.2 million in funding to festivals, major

performing arts company Dancenorth QMF and other dedicated regional programming. Following our landmark investment in regional infrastructure such as the Bulmba-ja Arts Centre and the Cairns Performing Arts Centre, our investment in regional infrastructure continues to generate important outcomes across the state. Earlier this year I joined the Premier—

CHAIR: Minister, I am very sorry to interrupt you. We have just a few minutes left and I know you will want to make some closing remarks to thank your department. Could I turn to the deputy chair, please.

Dr ROWAN: Director-General, are you aware of any ministerial staff applying pressure to individuals in your department, including yourself, for responses that minimise problems or discourage written advice on difficult topics?

Ms O'Connor: My answer again is: absolutely not.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, my office has been hearing from artists on low pay who are struggling with the 17 per cent increase in rent which is impacting their capacity to continue in the sector. Will a rent freeze or caps on rents be part of the stage 2 rental reforms as a tool to support artists?

CHAIR: Member, the question does very much relate to the housing portfolio. I do see the crossover, but primarily it does relate to housing. I will allow the question, but I will allow the minister to answer within the context of the arts and not stray into housing.

Ms ENOCH: This government has been an incredible supporter of the arts and artists across the state. Our first action plan supported 10,000 artists and arts workers. When you see festivals coming back—festivals supported all of the programming we have been able to support in our first action plan—that equates to individuals and companies who were able to work because of the support of the Queensland government through our action plan under our road map.

We have a very clear vision for the future to support more artists and arts workers. We want Queensland to be the place where artists are grown, where they stay and where they help other artists grow. That is the goal of our 10-year road map. We continue to do that work. Now we have a \$50 million envelope for our second action plan. I am happy to table the second action plan for the benefit of the member for South Brisbane, Creative Together. Called Grow, this action plan is all about growing. We want to see more artists supported in this state, and we are doing that through record investment.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, they will not be able to stay if rents keep increasing—

CHAIR: Order, member! Minister, would you mind seeking leave to table that document?

Ms ENOCH: Yes, Chair, I seek leave to table that document.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Is leave granted? Leave is granted. Minister, we have just two very short minutes before I need to close this section of the hearing.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair and committee members, for your time today. I also thank Hansard and other parliamentary staff whose work has enabled us to continue this hearing in a very COVID-safe way. Thank you to my director-general, deputy directors-general and staff from the department for all of their incredibly hard work preparing for this hearing. I would also like to thank representatives of the arts statutory bodies for being here as well as the CEO of the Residential Tenancies Authority.

Finally, I thank my ministerial staff for the work they have done in preparing for today. It has been an honour to speak on the incredible achievements of this department and the incredible hard work of frontline staff who every day are working hard to support individuals and families who are facing the challenges of housing stress across our state—similar to what we are seeing right across Australia. I want to acknowledge all of those workers who work incredibly hard and who have helped us present this information to the committee today.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, and thank you to everyone involved here this morning. That concludes the committee's consideration of the estimates for the arts portfolio area. The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolios of communities, housing, digital economy and the arts has expired. Thank you, Minister. Thank you, departmental officers, for your attendance and for the work that you do every day to support Queenslanders.

The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 12.30 pm with the examination of the estimates for the portfolios of the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

Proceedings suspended from 11.45 am to 12.30 pm.

**ESTIMATES—COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE—
SENIORS AND DISABILITY SERVICES; ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLAND PARTNERSHIPS**

In Attendance

Hon. CD Crawford, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Ms K Kiss, Chief of Staff

Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships


Dr C Sarra, Director-General

Ms K Parton, Deputy Director-General, Policy and Corporate Services

Ms J Lynas, Director of Forensic Disability

Ms T Williams, Commissioner, Family Responsibilities Commission

Mr C'Zarke Maza, Commissioner, Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa

 **CHAIR:** The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2022 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The committee will examine the minister's portfolios until 3.15 pm and will suspend proceedings during this time for a break, from 1.45 pm to 2 pm. As was determined by the House, the committee will consider the minister's portfolio areas as follows: seniors and disability services from 12.30 pm to 1.45 pm, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, including Family Responsibilities Commission, from 2 pm to 3.15 pm. I remind all honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can be raised only during the time specified for the area, as was agreed by the House.

The following non-committee members have sought and been granted leave to participate in the hearing in accordance with standing orders: the members for Broadwater, Buderim, Chatsworth, Everton, Glass House, Kawana, Maroochydore, Moggill, Scenic Rim, South Brisbane, Surfers Paradise and Whitsunday.

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 during 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 preamble, arguments or opinions. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members.

I wish to reiterate to all those participating in today's hearing of the sentiment of Mr Speaker's ruling of 30 July 2018, when he recognised the importance of maintaining the dignity of the estimates committee process in terms of questioning, general behaviour and adherence to standing orders. Last week Mr Speaker reminded all members that the estimates process was created to ensure that proper scrutiny occurs and that people responsible for various portfolio areas are provided the opportunity to answer questions. Standing order 185 in relation to disorderly members further determines the conduct of parliamentarians during estimates hearings, and I will exercise this standing order as required to ensure that our behaviour today as parliamentarians reflects the expectations of the communities we all lead.

I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion as chair or by order of the committee. I encourage everyone to wear face masks while in the chamber and remind members and officials to remove their face mask when speaking, to support Hansard.

On behalf of the committee I welcome our visiting committee members. I also welcome the minister, the director-general, departmental officers and members of the public who are watching the broadcast today. At this point I would also like to welcome our Auslan interpreter for this section of the

public hearing program. I thank you for your ongoing support. I also welcome Sienna Catholic school from the electorate of Buderim who are visiting in the gallery today. We welcome our young people. 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 the director-general.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of seniors, disability services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships 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 CRAWFORD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would also like to acknowledge, as I did hear you do earlier as chair, that we are meeting today on the lands of Aboriginal people and I pay my respects to elders past and present. I think we are very fortunate in this country to have two of the world's oldest continuing living cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share. I also acknowledge that First Nations people continue to assert that their sovereignty was never ceded and that this always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

I acknowledge the Auslan interpreter, Mikey. He pops up at quite a number of things. I have even seen him dance! Well done, mate. It is quite a show. Here with me today are my director-general, Dr Chris Sarra, and deputy directors-general and staff from across by department. Also present are the independent Director of Forensic Disability, Ms Jenny Lynas, and our two commissioners within the portfolio: Commissioner Tammy Williams from the Family Responsibilities Commission and Commissioner C'Zarke Maza, the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa Commissioner.

I am pleased to advise the committee that my department has continued to deliver for Queensland's First Nations people, for our seniors and for those living with a disability, their carers and their families. We are delivering better services, creating good jobs and economic prosperity and protecting our great Queensland lifestyle. There truly is no better place to live, and we are dedicated to creating a Queensland where every person can live a full and inclusive life, achieve their aspirations and fulfil their potential. We are proud of our support for Queenslanders and we welcome the opportunity to speak to the committee about the important work my department is doing for Queenslanders.

I am especially pleased to be here today on 4 August, which is National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day. It is a day when we celebrate First Nations children and families and the cultures and communities that support them. It is also a day of truth telling. August 4 is the day that was arbitrarily assigned to First Nations children of the stolen generation as their birth date in cases where their actual birth date was not known. Truth telling is central to reconciliation and to treaty with First Nations peoples. The Palaszczuk government has been working to progress a path to treaty with First Nations peoples which, as the Premier announced in her estimates, we will formally launch on 16 August.

My department has led the way for other government departments and for businesses, organisations and the community to develop new ways of working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Reforms led by my agency promote a deeper appreciation for the two oldest living civilisations in the world and bring non-Indigenous and Indigenous people together to celebrate and embrace this ancient culture on these ancient lands.

This year my department will administer more than \$2.8 billion to improve the lives of Queenslanders. This includes the Queensland government's estimated contribution of more than \$2 billion to the NDIS and more than \$725 million for concessions and rebates for eligible seniors and other Queenslanders with the costs of living, including a \$175 rebate for eligible Queenslanders. To make sure that eligible Queensland seniors get all the discounts and cost-of-living rebates they are entitled to, we continue to deliver our successful seniors expos to every corner of the state. We have committed a record \$7.9 million to prevent and respond to elder abuse, increasing funding for seniors legal and support services to more than \$6.8 million per year. My department continues to work productively with our federal counterparts to make sure Queensland receives our fair share from federal initiatives such as aged care and the NDIS to get the best outcomes for Queenslanders.

It is inspiring in our nation today that there is change in the air towards voice, treaty and truth. We have a federal government committed to fully implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and I want to reaffirm my commitment to supporting the Albanese government in this nation-building work. Chair, I look forward to the opportunity today to speak more about the great work of our department.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure for the seniors and disability services portfolios. I welcome my colleague the deputy chair, member for Burnett, for his first question.

Mr BENNETT: I will defer to the shadow minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: I welcome all officials and I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet. I thank the committee chair for having me here as a guest. My first question is to the director-general, with the reference being the annual report at page 59—the Fraud and Corruption Control Committee, which I note in 2021 had 145 referrals. Can you advise the committee how many referrals the Fraud and Corruption Control Committee received in 2021-22?

Dr Sarra: I will just take a moment to consult my colleague. Regrettably, I am informed that we do not have access to those numbers here, but we will be pleased, Minister, if it is alright with you, to pursue those and have them before this period expires.

Mr LANGBROEK: That is fine. I understand that you may not have them here.

Mr CRAWFORD: Chair, we are happy to take that on notice.

CHAIR: The minister will take that on notice.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is about the numbers and whether they could, as per the annual report for 2021-21, be separated into corruption and misconduct, also which parts of the department they are all relevant to and then findings. Any detail the government is prepared to provide is something the committee would appreciate.

Dr Sarra: Thank you, member. We will attend to the specifics of your question and have it on notice, thank you.

Mr LANGBROEK: Director-General, what feedback has come from the royal commission into violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability about complaints to do with the accommodation support and respite services? The reference is page 4 of the SDS.

Dr Sarra: Again, we do not have any specific references to the specific elements raised about such accommodation services, but I note that abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability is abhorrent. We welcome the royal commission and we are very keen to cooperate with it to contribute to better outcomes and enhance quality of life, greater inclusion and accessibility, and we are very committed to continuing to cooperate with the royal commission to the fullest extent and closely monitor its progress as that inquiry continues. The final reporting date for that royal commission was extended to 29 September 2023.

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, I am seeking clarification on whether the director-general can advise whether there has been communication from the royal commission to the department about those matters to do with AS and RS.

Dr Sarra: Not that we are aware of any direct communication, although our department monitors the proceedings very closely, and obviously we are informed if there are any emerging and immediate issues raised. We attend to them as required. Again I state that we are very determined to cooperate with that royal commission and will be ready to respond to any such recommendations as they unfold.

Mr LANGBROEK: Director-General, has the department received any complaints about the rollout of the department's internal COVID vaccination program?

Dr Sarra: No, not to my knowledge, member, we have not received any such complaints.

Mr LANGBROEK: Director-General, can you confirm that, because the internal COVID vaccination program rollout was delayed and then halted, many AS and RS clients have not had their winter vaccination for COVID?

Dr Sarra: Let me just check. We have been working very closely with the Department of Health in relation to the rollout of vaccinations for people, given their level of exposure and the level of risk. I can confirm that as of 30 June 2022, 436 clients—that is almost 96 per cent—have received two doses of the COVID vaccine; 397 clients—that is 91.06 per cent—have received three doses of the COVID-19 vaccine; and 77 clients have received four doses of the COVID vaccine. There are 12 clients who are not participating in the COVID-19 vaccination program as their decision-makers have not provided consent. Seven clients are working in collaboration with their doctors and their support network to determine a safe way to commence the COVID-19 vaccination program.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is mainly to do with the department in terms of disabilities. Can the director-general advise whether there has been any feedback about the Premier not having 'Paralympics' in her ministerial title?

Dr Sarra: Madam Chair, I am not privy to feedback to the Premier, I am sorry.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am asking if the department has had feedback, because I would have thought that potentially it would be those people with disability who may have had a view about that. I have had some feedback; I am wondering whether the department has.

Dr Sarra: To the best of my knowledge, I have not heard of such concerns. Let me just check, though, to make sure I am not misinforming you. No, I have not heard of such concerns, but if there are concerns, we would be more than happy to hear them and play our part in facilitating whatever voices need to be heard in and around that concern.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am still sticking with the issue of accommodation support and respite services, Director-General, because obviously the changes are coming very soon for that service. I wonder if you could advise us, given that, as I understand it, each client receives up to \$304,000 in almost like a block funding, whether the department would be able to provide the committee with the list of recipients and how much they receive.

Dr Sarra: Can I just clarify what changes you are referring to that are coming, so that I can be clear so I can respond to your question adequately?

Mr LANGBROEK: As I understand it, they will come under the NDIS. Therefore, the current method of funding them will be different by next year's estimates—I think by the end of 30 June next year.

Dr Sarra: Thank you for the question, but I will just check with the minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy for the minister to answer.

Mr CRAWFORD: It is probably more appropriate that I take that question, Madam Chair. At this stage there is no change to the movement going forward around AS and RS. We currently have an arrangement with the Commonwealth government as part of the bilateral agreement that, at this stage, ceases on 30 June 2023. Other states have similar ones. There has been no decision made by either Commonwealth or state government in respect to going forward after that, so it is not a foregone conclusion. With respect to NDIS, many of the clients we have in AS and RS are NDIS clients and they can exercise their choice and control as to where they want to live. They have been able to do that since the beginning of NDIS. Some of those clients do exercise their right to go and find other places to live. I want to clarify that there is no decision of government around that end of in-kind arrangement.

CHAIR: Member, do you have a further question?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to follow up on that with the minister. In other words, any discussion about a financial difference between what clients are currently receiving and what they may receive is speculative because it has not been finalised? Can you confirm?

Mr CRAWFORD: That is correct.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can the minister confirm that because of changed living arrangements, with some people having passed away if they are in a shared house, currently there would be some people who are receiving these services who receive more than under the in-kind arrangement of \$304,000? Some would actually receive more than that and the department is happy to keep that going at the moment?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. I think it is very speculative in nature. I will come back to what I said before. All of the clients who currently live in our AS and RS facilities can exercise choice and control. As I mentioned, most, if not all, have NDIS plans. The financial arrangements are certainly subject to them. If they choose to go to a different provider they are financial arrangements that are between that client and any provider. I think the member is speculating on something that has not even been decided.

Mr LANGBROEK: Sorry, Minister. I am asking about the current in-kind arrangements where the state is currently providing funding of up to \$304,000 per client. The question is whether some, because of changed living arrangements, may be receiving more because they are not moved out of a house when they are in a house of three and two may pass away or move away. That is my query.

Mr CRAWFORD: I will pass to the DG. He has a response for that.

Dr Sarra: I understand the complexity that you are describing. Yes, it does change. It is quite an agile environment and ever changing because, sadly, people pass away and that creates a need. I can assure the member and other Queenslanders that we are consistently reflecting on occupancy ratios

to determine whether or not we are enabling the best value for money and the best use of those facilities. Our deputy director-general, Matthew Lupi, is constantly reviewing those arrangements to ensure that we are getting the best value for money and that staffing arrangements are adequate. He does that quite constantly.

CHAIR: We will now turn to the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: I refer to page 1 of the SDS and ask you to inform the committee what the Palaszczuk government is doing to support vulnerable seniors who are at risk of abuse?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. Firstly, I recommend that any senior who is experiencing any form of abuse or is suffering hardship at the hands of relatives or members of their community or any community member who is aware of the mistreatment of a senior should not hesitate to call the helpline number, 1300651192 to get advice and support. The Palaszczuk government funds critical services that are available at no cost to Queensland seniors.

The 2022-23 budget includes a significant increase in recurrent funding of \$2.8 million to an investment of \$7.9 million for elder abuse awareness, prevention and intervention. This will not only provide extra capacity to existing services; it will expand the SLASS reach to new locations where we have recorded increased inquiries such as in the Logan-Beaudesert region, Ipswich, Moreton Bay north as well as outreach services for outback Queensland and the cape and Torres region. This is on top of the \$3.9 million to provide seniors legal and support services in the 11 existing locations of Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, Hervey Bay, Gladstone, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns.

An amount of \$623,000 has been invested to deliver the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit. During the financial year 2021-22 the prevention unit received 3,841 phone calls to the helpline including 2,338 notifications of abuse. This is an increase in calls of 12 per cent and an increase in notifications of 15.6 per cent in comparison to the earlier year. As a complement to the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit, \$104,000 is invested in scams and fraud awareness through the Seniors Enquiry Line, which is 1300135500. The government is committed to education and awareness raising. I would recommend all members to review the campaign materials that are available on the department's website and on social media.

The government also runs the elder abuse prevention campaign each year to coincide with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, which is 15 June. The 2022 campaign continued the 2021 theme: together we can stop elder abuse by encouraging Queenslanders to be alert to the signs of elder abuse and to seek assistance. The campaign ran for six weeks with posters, brochures and supporting information distributed to frontline sector and community organisations as well as relevant state and local government agencies.

Over the period 2020 to 2023 the government has spent or committed to spend \$574,000 on elder abuse awareness raising. Just like the obligation to report domestic violence, it is everyone's responsibility to call out elder abuse in our community.

Mr SKELTON: I refer to the SDS on page 3 and ask that you inform the committee how the Palaszczuk government is supporting seniors through the Seniors Legal and Support Service?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. In a similar theme to the previous question, older people can be vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including in family relationships, as consumers and when transitioning from the family home. This is why the government has invested in the SLASS for over 15 years now, having been announced by the then minister for communities, disability services, seniors and youth, the Hon. Warren Pitt MP, back in 2006. The SLASS provides free legal and social work support for older people experiencing elder abuse, mistreatment, neglect or financial exploitation.

From July 2021 to March 2022 this service has helped 758 older people address financial concerns at no cost to themselves. This year's budget, as I have mentioned, includes a significant increase of \$2.8 million to the SLASS. This will provide extra capacity, as I mentioned before, in those other regions, ensuring that we can extend that. It means there will be a total of 15 locations across Queensland where seniors can access social support, legal advice and specialist financial information and advice. I would encourage anyone who thinks that the person who lives next door to them, a family member or someone down the road may be being abused by someone else or by a family member to reach out and get some advice on the numbers I have listed previously, or they can contact our department.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to the SDS on page 1. Can you advise the committee of the status of the Queensland Carers Advisory Council?

Mr CRAWFORD: The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring carers are valued and supported. They make a significant contribution to the people they care for and that benefits the whole community. The Queensland Carers Advisory Council provides carers with a direct voice to government to promote their views and their concerns. The council consists of four carer members, including one grandparent carer; four members representing carer organisations, including one for grandparents; and four members representing the Queensland government.

Around 533,000 Queenslanders are unpaid carers, with one in 20 young people aged 15 to 24 being carers and one in every four carers aged over the age of 65. Grandparents dominate the world of unpaid child care. Carers may experience lower wellbeing, higher physiological distress and poorer physical health as a result. There can also be costs associated with being a carer including loss of income and particularly loss of superannuation.

We know that being a carer is not an easy job. It is why in recognition of the contribution carers make, the government provides the Carer Business Discount Card to approximately 17½ thousand carers to help ease the cost-of-living pressures. We will also invest \$988,000 in the 2022-23 budget in the Time for Grandparents Program, which provides advice and support to unpaid senior carers who have primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren.

We also support the Carers Advisory Council. The voice of the council is vital to informing the government on how we can continue to support carers across Queensland. I met with the newly appointed council at their first meeting in April this year. The council have since met in July this year, and I am impressed and grateful for their high-quality advice. I look forward to working with the council on a program to address their priorities including carer legislation and policy, health and wellbeing, and the impact of caring on employment earnings and retirement incomes.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, I refer to the SDS on page 1. At last year's estimates hearing you informed the committee of Seniors Month activities including a film festival that went statewide, Brisbane ballet classes that were available to all Queenslanders through the magic of technology and a pickleball tournament not far from me, in regional Kandanga. Can you provide the committee with a preview of this year's activities?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. Queensland seniors are ready to celebrate the second Queensland Seniors Month in October this year. The celebrations will begin on 1 October—the United Nations International Day of Older Persons—and will end on 30 October, being Grandparents' Day. More than \$100,000 has been provided by the government in grants to community organisations to support Seniors Month celebrations. One hundred and eight organisations have received grants of up to \$1,000 each to hold community events that support seniors. Council on the Ageing Queensland once again coordinated the grants process, and I thank them for their support in delivering what I believe will be a truly wonderful month. The theme of Seniors Month is 'social connections' and October will be a connect-fest. The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent flooding events have underscored how important social connections truly are.

Despite the impact of the pandemic in 2021, the inaugural Seniors Month was an enormous success, recording the largest numbers of events ever. This year, in 2022, we are optimistic about being able to meet, connect and celebrate in person with Seniors Month events throughout October. If it is not safe to do so, we will again move the celebrations online.

This year will see dance events in the Lockyer Valley; a Vive la France day in Yeppoon; and human book exchanges, where people can borrow an older person to hear their wisdom and life experiences. I encourage all Queenslanders to participate in events in their community, and I look forward to sharing more information in the coming months on the planned activities. If people want to find out more, they can go to www.qldseniorsmonth.org.au, or they can ring COTA Queensland on 1300738348.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We will move to the deputy chair for his next question.

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the shadow minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Referencing the SDS page 8 and the annual report about statistics on employees with disability, I wonder if the minister could advise us of the percentage of employees with disability employed in the department and across the public sector as at 30 June 2022?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question; this is a really important issue. We know how important it is to have a diversified workforce. Our department tries to lead the way in this respect. Currently in our department, out of a workforce of 1,903, 5.03 per cent of our employees have disclosed that they have a disability—that is 100. However, it is important to note that in the recent Working for Queensland survey of department staff around 10 per cent of employees reported that they had a

disability. While 5.03 per cent are formally disclosed, we know that in Working for Queensland double the amount of staff identified. We believe that we still have a number of staff out there who have a disability and who, for whatever reason, have not disclosed that. That is obviously ongoing work for us. Those figures are for our department.

The second part of the question asked for a percentage across the Queensland government. Across the Queensland government it is 3.25 per cent, or 9,323. I imagine there will be a similar issue with that: over and above that three per cent there will be a number of Queensland government employees who are not yet, for whatever reason, prepared to disclose that they have a disability.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, I refer to the CCC report into the education department's recruitment of a principal. What actions have you taken subsequently with the director-general as it pertains to his department?

CHAIR: Is that question directed to the minister or the director-general?

Mr LANGBROEK: To the minister, asking what action he has taken with the director-general in the department.

Mr CRAWFORD: I do not understand the question. I might have that again.

CHAIR: Member, do you mind repeating your question? I was a little perplexed, too, as to its relationship to this portfolio area.

Mr LANGBROEK: The former CCC chair recommended that all people with senior public servants should take note and read that recruitment outcome. My question is: what has happened in this department between the minister, the director-general and the department?

Mr CRAWFORD: I might hand this question to the director-general, because I am unaware of any conversations or any reporting. Director-General, do you have anything to add?

Dr Sarra: I am happy to report that I was appointed to the role through a transparent merit process.

Mr LANGBROEK: Not your appointment, Director-General.

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise and shadow spokesperson, I understand what you are asking but I am not sure that our witnesses have. Would you rephrase the question?

Mr LANGBROEK: Given it was a recommendation of the former CCC chair that senior public servants across government should note what happened in the education department's recruitment of the principal, I would expect that with any recruitment that is happening throughout your department you would be saying, 'Now, let's make sure we do not do what happened there.'

Dr Sarra: I understand. I can assure you that, even prior to that CCC report coming out, we took very seriously transparent selection processes and we attended to the Public Service provisions. I ensure that my very senior colleagues also do so quite strictly. We read the report when it came out. I think the recommendations confirmed our good practice and the diligence with which we attend to such requirements.

Mr LANGBROEK: I seek leave to table a constituent request on her paraplegic son's behalf—I have here 10 copies—about the inadequacy of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme. I know that there has been a forum held about that. The reference is page 20 of the Interim Disability Service Plan. I ask the minister and the director-general what they are doing to fix this issue.

CHAIR: The member has sought leave to table this document. Is leave granted? Leave is granted. We will give the minister and the relevant officials a copy. Member, was that question directed to the minister?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy for either or both to comment about this.

CHAIR: We will give you a moment, Minister.

Mr CRAWFORD: I can start on that now, if you like, Chair. Obviously it would be inappropriate of me to speak of a particular case, but I do note the correspondence that has been tabled. To make it really clear, the NDIS is responsible for the transport costs for people with disability who cannot use public transport or travel independently. Taxi subsidies were expected to transition to the NDIS by now. However, NDIS participants have not yet received sufficient funding in their plans for transport supports.

Queensland continues to deliver the Taxi Subsidy Scheme which is administered through the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Queensland continues to deliver the Taxi Subsidy Scheme to ensure that NDIS participants can continue to participate in everyday activities. It is a big issue for people with disability. I have had many conversations even with some of our key stakeholders in terms

of the time that it takes for them to get wheelchair taxis and the like. It is blowing out to hours and hours. I know that this was addressed in the transport minister's estimates—I actually heard the member for South Brisbane ask the question of Minister Bailey—and his answer was effective.

Dr MacMAHON: It was not an answer.

Mr CRAWFORD: It is also something that we are continuing to work on with our Commonwealth counterparts and the disability reform ministers. This is an issue across the entire country and essentially as a state we have to wait until NDIS comes forward with how it wants to run it. As I say, it is something that is raised quite a bit.

One of the small things that we did as part of our budget is that the Queensland government increased the subsidy cap from \$25 to \$30. Ultimately, this is still something that is with the NDIS. We did have a conversation about it last week at the Disability Reform Ministers' Meeting with Minister Shorten about progressing that. Currently we are running through a series of extensions of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme, but ultimately as a nation the NDIS needs to come up with what the plan is.

I cannot answer specifically other than to say that the member for Surfers Paradise is correct. These issues are out there and they are significant issues and I do feel for people who are caught up in this. I know that some in the taxi industry are reporting that they are having trouble getting enough taxi drivers and fleet issues and those sorts of things and they are looking for the assurance going forward around the market. I think everyone is on the same page here, but these are actually levers that are controlled by the Commonwealth government, not the state.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, also on the question of taxis, it seems that leaving a vital service like transport to the private sector—and you have alluded to availability of drivers and cars—has failed. What investigations has the Queensland government done into offering public services that can help people with disabilities and seniors get to where they need to go?

CHAIR: Member, I might just get you to rephrase that question minus the inference. The statement of it not being successful is an opinion, so I ask you to rephrase the question slightly please.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, what investigations has the Queensland government done into offering publicly funded and run transport services for people who are unable to rely on private taxis?

CHAIR: Thank you, member.

Mr CRAWFORD: Thanks for the question. Predominantly that sits with the department of transport, so I am actually unable to answer that question as it sits with another department. I will go back to my previous answer in that the role that we play in this department is our connection to the Commonwealth with the Disability Reform Ministers' Meeting and obviously the management of the NDIS. The only avenue that we have is to keep putting pressure and provide assistance where we can to the Commonwealth to resolve this matter from NDIA through NDIS. I think the particulars that the member is looking for actually are controlled by the department of transport, not this department.

CHAIR: Thank you, member. Member for Cook?

Ms LUI: Minister, I refer to the SDS at page 1. Can you inform the committee how the Palaszczuk government is supporting Queensland's seniors to offset cost-of-living increases?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. This year the government has committed more than \$725 million in concessions and rebates that will help Queenslanders, particularly older people and those on fixed or low incomes, to address cost-of-living pressures. These concessions provide Queenslanders with cost-of-living support for essentials like electricity, transport, health, housing, education and training services. It is a substantial increase of over \$300 million on the \$420 million that we had in the previous budget.

For example, in 2022-23 a retired couple in their 70s living in their own home in South-East Queensland with no dependents, both with a Queensland Seniors Card and on the pension, could be eligible for concessions including a \$372 electricity rebate, which has increased in line with the 9.2 per cent increase in the tariff 11 price; a \$120 South-East Queensland water subsidy for pensioner property owners; a 20 per cent subsidy on rates, up to a maximum \$200 for council rates; and \$81 for reticulated natural gas. They may also be able to receive a reduction of around \$174 on the annual registration of their small four-cylinder car and a \$175 cost-of-living rebate on their electricity bill. In total, they could save around \$1,122 with those concessions. In addition, they are entitled to discount travel on public transport, saving 50 per cent on fares. Those concessions can make a real difference to the bottom line.

Further, as part of this year's budget, all Queensland households will automatically receive the \$175 cost-of-living rebate on their electricity bill, and this will be the sixth rebate provided through electricity bills since 2017. We know that cost of living is putting significant pressure on Queenslanders.

Something that I have found when we have been talking to seniors at the seniors expos is that there are still a lot of Queensland seniors who are not tapping into all of their eligible concessions rebates. If there is one thing that I always try to encourage seniors to do it is to contact our department—we have a specific section of the department that manages concessions—and just have the conversation because you might just find that you are not getting everything that you are entitled to.

Sometimes some of the concessions rebates are not automatically allocated; sometimes you have to specifically ask for it. A good example of that is the electricity rebate. The providers do not automatically know that you have turned a certain age or have eligibility; you have to contact the electricity provider and say, 'I believe that I could be eligible.' That is the one thing that anyone watching today should take from this—and I know there will be thousands of people watching today of course—and as MPs we need to be able to get the word out to say, 'Please pick up the phone. Make the inquiry. You could be missing out on cash.'

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to the SDS at page 1. Can you provide advice to the committee about the seniors events that have been held across the state over the last 12 months and are there any plans that you may have for future events?

Mr CRAWFORD: That is a good segue from the last question. As a government we continue to deliver seniors expos but also Seniors Savings Pop-ups and other events across the state. We have \$200,000 in the budget to support the delivery of that. I also note that we have a very small team that does this, and it does a great job.

Since September 2021 over 1,000 seniors have attended our expos, with more planned for the remainder of the year and going into next year. The expos provide a range of information including safety tips from Queensland police and advice about Seniors Cards and concessions, as I mentioned in the earlier question. We actually have stallholders there so that people can physically go and have the conversation. There are also other stallholders there from government agencies like Transport and some other organisations such as UnitingCare, community organisations, Council on the Ageing and various health departments depending on where we are.

On 19 May I was pleased to be able to attend our first LGBTIQ+ Seniors Expo which was held in Cairns. That was a smaller sized expo, but it was specifically aimed at those Queensland seniors who are at a time of their life where they are having to make decisions about aged care and a range of other things but have concerns around how they might be seen or how they might be treated if someone starts coming into their house or they are going into a home. They reached out to me and we were able to have that small expo up in Cairns and hopefully we can do some more of those.

Our Seniors Savings Pop-up events have been held in shopping centres. Seniors can meet a government representative and ask questions about all those different services and concessions I mentioned before. We have had pop-ups in places like Toowoomba, Maroochydore, Springwood and Yeppoon, and we have more planned for the future. There was quite an impact on seniors events because of the pandemic—that goes without saying—so we ended up having to change, alter, cancel and postpone a number of events. All over I think it has been a very good success.

We launched the B.OLD short film festival in partnership with Event Cinemas. Those were shown in 20 locations across Queensland. I encourage people to look them up. You will be able to find them on the internet. We also had Ballet for Seniors workshops. They were held virtually to ensure safety and wellbeing. If I was doing that, I think I would want to make sure my camera was off! These workshops were filmed with the Queensland Ballet and were provided online. They were able to do some unique and cool things at a time when everyone was going through the pandemic and could not leave or have services come to them.

I encourage all Queenslanders to participate in events. It might not be for you; it might be for an elderly relative or a neighbour or someone like that that you might be able to share it with. I certainly encourage all MPs, where they can in their connections out in their electorate, to get the word out.

Mr SKELTON: The Queensland government negotiated a \$20 million investment from the Commonwealth to help increase NDIS participation between 2020 and 2022. Minister, what was the outcome of this investment?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. The true benefit of that investment is the life-changing care provided to new NDIS participants. The key achievements that were delivered under that program—and it was a program primarily aimed at helping people with disability access the NDIS and get the supports they need faster—assisted 3,070 Queenslanders with disability to access the NDIS, 43 per cent of whom were unsuccessful in their previous attempts without this support. Just think about that for a second: just under half of 3,000 people who had been unsuccessful in getting on NDIS now were on that scheme. That is the advantage of the access and referral teams.

They also provided assertive outreach to 2,243 vulnerable Queenslanders who previously experienced difficulties engaging with the government service systems. They reached 131 existing and new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers who attended NDIS business development seminars across Queensland with the goal of increasing the availability of culturally safe services for First Nations NDIS participants. All but one of the seminar attendees provided feedback stating that they would expand, transition or commence providing NDIS services in the next 12 months.

They worked with a leading university to design quality research to help government better understand the reasons Queensland NDIS participants are not fully using the funding provided in their plans. That research will focus on collecting perspectives from people living in regional and remote communities and from First Nations participants particularly. Evidence collected from the research will be used to support the department's advocacy for necessary systemic reform to the NDIS to ensure participants in Queensland can get the supports they need and are entitled to.

The real benefit of the program reaches beyond NDIS access for individuals and has flow-on impacts to the NDIS market in Queensland. An effectiveness review commissioned by the department found that this investment created significant economic and social benefit to Queensland, including \$332 million in total NDIS plans for these new participants—that is a lot of money—and creation of an estimated 1,600 jobs across the state if the total plan values were spent on disability support workers. It also created reduced resilience on mainstream state based universal and funded services by people who had not previously engaged with the NDIS.

Our government funded the assessment and referral teams, ART, in 2022-23 to assist Queenslanders, especially children and young people with disability, who have been unsuccessful in their attempts to access the NDIS. If members have constituents who are trying to get onto the NDIS but have been, for whatever reason, knocked back or are having trouble, they can reach out to our department and they may be eligible for support under the ART program to get them on.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Deputy Chair?

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the member for South Brisbane.

Dr MacMAHON: Director-General, students with disability are receiving disproportionately high numbers of school disciplinary absences. Can the government advise what support is being implemented to reduce the number of students with disability receiving school disciplinary absences?

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, I will allow the question. I acknowledge that the director-general will answer it as he sees fit; however, it is probably best a question for the education portfolio. I will allow the director-general to respond.

Dr Sarra: You took the words out of my mouth there, Madam Chair. Thank you for the question, first of all. It is a little bit like the question earlier about transport. As we are not responsible for the delivery of transport services, we are also not responsible for education services, but we do play a role in terms of investing in advocacy and ensuring that the disability advocacy networks have a sense of voice so that if they are running into such concerns they can make those concerns heard. As Madam Chair points out, it is probably a question better asked of the Education director-general, I am sorry.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, Queensland is set to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Presumably all athlete accommodation will be designed to be fully accessible. Has the government given any consideration to committing to transitioning this accommodation to permanent disability public housing following the games?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. Our department will do what we can to support the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's task force and the board and the work that they do, but this is still a long way out. We want to make sure that the Olympics, and particularly the Paralympics, in Brisbane really showcase this city, this state and this country. We have a lot of work to do in 10 years. I am very impressed to see names like Kurt Fearnley being there, as well as other names.

I think it is going to be a journey for us all. Our department's responsibility in this is fairly thin, but certainly we will, if we are invited to and where we can, work with those other departments and the Premier's department around this. Can I say: in the conversations we have been having thus far about the journey towards 2032, inclusive arrangements are a big part of that. Specifically around the housing aspect that you mentioned, I am not aware of anything particularly at this stage.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, can you please advise how many people with disability are currently on the social housing register?

CHAIR: Again, member for South Brisbane, that question is probably best left to the minister for housing, who was here for an earlier session. I am happy for the minister to make comment as he sees fit. He may or may not be able to contribute. Over to you, Minister.

Mr CRAWFORD: You are absolutely right: the housing register is solely controlled by DCHDE, and I think they were here just an hour or so ago. The question would have to go to them. We do not have oversight of that. However, there would be plenty of people with lived disability on that list—I have no doubt about that—but we do not have oversight of that.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, I refer to page 18 of the annual report. My question comes back to your last answer to the government questions about people who do not qualify for the NDIS. Can you advise the committee what provisions are made by the department for Queenslanders who have a psychosocial disability but do not qualify for NDIS funding?

Mr CRAWFORD: There is a bit of a crossover here, obviously, that happens with health as well so there has to be strong collaboration between agencies such as NDIA as well as the various health agencies across the state. It is a really complex issue because psychosocial as well as disability can sometimes go hand in hand and it can be difficult, obviously, around the assessments. We do have people in Queensland who did not transition over to the NDIS when the scheme went full because they did not meet the criteria for NDIS. We grandfather them. I think it is about 17 people or thereabouts. We grandfather them, as a government. That was part of the arrangements. That is because they were there then.

To answer your question, our department does not specifically do anything. If they do not meet the criteria for NDIS then it really falls back into the health precinct.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question relates to the Forensic Disability Service. I continue to receive correspondence from former staff about the Forensic Disability Service. Is the minister satisfied that there is appropriate management and professional staff interaction for the benefit of clients?

CHAIR: Minister, that is seeking an opinion. I am happy for you to proceed.

Mr CRAWFORD: I am unaware of any issues. Without going to an opinion, nothing has been raised with me that would cause me concern. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, I have the director here who can also provide further information, if you want, depending on where you want to go with that.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy for Ms Lynas to at least give us a bit of an overview. I have toured it at your invitation, thank you, Minister. I am interested to hear something because I keep getting these letters.

Mr CRAWFORD: While the director is coming forward, there are two parts of the FDS. There is the operational component of it, which obviously is run by our department. I have a DDG here who can drill down on more information. The director's role—and she can probably explain this—is more of an oversight role.

Ms Lynas: As the minister pointed out, there is a separation in terms of my powers versus the responsibility of the department. My role is around legislative oversight and ensuring that the care and protection of the clients is done in accordance with the act. Unfortunately, the staffing issues that you have raised are probably best answered by the department. I am not really able to offer anything else in relation to that, I am sorry.

Mr LANGBROEK: No problem.

CHAIR: We will turn to the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Minister, Queenslanders with NDIS plans are not utilising their plan supports. Why and what work is being done to increase utilisation, and I refer to SDS page 1?

Mr CRAWFORD: This is quite a significant issue that is not unique to Queensland. Despite an increasing number of service providers in Queensland, some NDIS participants are still unable to access all the supports funded in their plans. That is due to inadequate service availability across all locations and for all support types. When an NDIS plan utilisation is low, unfortunately it means people with disability are not receiving all the supports or the services that they should be receiving.

As at the end of March this year, the average utilisation rate for Queensland participants was 78 per cent; however, plan utilisation in remote and very remote areas is lower at 66 per cent and 57 per cent respectively. That means that in very remote areas people are barely able to get just over half of their plan utilised for varying reasons and what we call the thin markets.

While market stewardship is the responsibility of the Commonwealth, the Queensland government works alongside the Albanese government, the NDIA and Commonwealth agencies to address plan under-utilisation by trying to stimulate markets and workforce growth in Queensland.

Under the Disability Connect and Outreach Program, my department has commissioned research into why participants are not using all the supports in their plans. The research focuses on First Nations participants and those living in regional, rural and remote communities.

The research will be finalised this financial year and will provide an evidence base to work with the Commonwealth to further develop the NDIS market in those communities where access to supports and services has not developed as it was expected to do. This work, along with the former Queensland Productivity Commission's 2021 review of the NDIS markets, will support the Commonwealth action by providing contemporary evidence and ideas about ways to improve utilisation. Our department is working with other Queensland government agencies to implement the QPC recommendations for which the Queensland government is responsible.

In June this year, Commonwealth, state and territory disability ministers agreed to work together to develop and consult on the terms of reference for a review of NDIS pricing, markets, compliance, quality and safeguards. I look forward to contributing to that important work at a national level. Our department is supporting market development in Queensland by actively monitoring the progress of current NDIA market interventions through both interdepartmental and intergovernmental forums. The Palaszczuk government is committed to continuing to work with the Albanese government to address the market supply issues that contribute to the under-utilisation of plans in Queensland.

I can report to the committee that I have had a conversation with Bill Shorten, the federal minister, particularly around Longreach. We have had some very strong representation from the Longreach community about a number of people with a disability who have plans but there is a lack or almost a complete void of providers in the town. Bill Shorten has agreed to accompany me to Longreach. Chair, it is a great community out there. There is really good leadership through the council and the business community in Longreach. Hopefully this is an opportunity for us to try to resolve thin markets. If we can make it work in Longreach then we can make it work in pretty much any postcode in the country.

Mr BENNETT: Don't forget Lachie Millar.

CHAIR: There was some commentary there from my deputy chair.

Mr BENNETT: It is free.

CHAIR: Minister, would you please advise the committee on the status of the All Abilities Queensland final report?

Mr CRAWFORD: All Abilities Queensland: opportunities for all is the current Queensland state disability plan. Due to delays from the Commonwealth in finalising the new national disability strategy, in August 2021 I issued a statement of ongoing commitment to All Abilities Queensland on behalf of the Queensland government. The new state disability plan is being finalised in collaboration with people with disability to align with the new national strategy and will be supported by disability service plans developed by each department.

Since the current plan was launched in 2017, we have successfully achieved all 93 actions under the five priority areas of communities for all, lifelong learning, employment, everyday services, and leadership and participation. The plan has played an important role in shaping the Queensland government's disability actions and priorities during the transition to the NDIS in Queensland and under the previous National Disability Strategy. A final progress report on the achievement of actions under All Abilities Queensland for the period 2017 to 2020 has been prepared in consultation with Queensland government departments. I have that with me and I am happy to table it. I am happy to seek leave to table that and provide a copy for the committee's information. The final report is now available on the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships website, which is www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au.

CHAIR: The minister has sought leave to table the document *All Abilities Queensland: opportunities for all*. Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Minister, I am conscious of time. We have five minutes. I know that you acknowledged you would take a question on notice. You may wish to fulfil that obligation by a future date, or did you want to come back to that question now?

Mr CRAWFORD: I am advised that we do not have the response to that at this stage. We will see whether we can get it by the end of the session.

CHAIR: Thank you. In that case, Minister, we do have a minute or two. Do you have any other questions, Deputy Chair?

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the member for Maiwar.


Mr BERKMAN: Minister, last year disability advocates rallied for an ongoing commitment to fund disability advocacy. At the time the government made a commitment to fund that disability advocacy until June next year, as I understand it. What is the Queensland government's commitment to funding disability advocacy beyond June 2023?

Mr CRAWFORD: I am glad you asked that question, because it is a quite topical and important one. Without going into too much detail—I think it is something that occurred with the transition to NDIS across all states and territories—funding for peak bodies and those sorts of organisations is something that I would not say was missed but did not quite mature as everyone expected. We ended up in this space where we thought the Commonwealth government was going to be funding advocacy through NDIS. Anyway, we had what occurred. You are right: we went to work and we funded the advocacy program. There is no intention to cease that. Currently we have \$6 million for disability advocacy, from 1 January this year to the end of June 2023. Obviously it is a budgetary process but there is no intention for us to shelve it.

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, member. That concludes this session. The committee will now adjourn for a very short break. The hearing will resume at 2 pm with the examination of the estimates for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships portfolio. I thank our Auslan interpreters for their fine work in supporting the committee today.

Proceedings suspended from 1.43 pm to 2.00 pm.

 **CHAIR:** The hearing is now resumed. I welcome back the minister and departmental officials. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships portfolio. I acknowledge the many First Nations men and women who are present in the chamber this afternoon. I particularly acknowledge my colleague the member for Cook, Cynthia Lui, as a Torres Strait Islander person and the first Torres Strait Islander person to be elected to Queensland parliament. I also acknowledge Ms Tammy Williams, the Commissioner of the Family Responsibilities Commission, and welcome her to the hearing this afternoon. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships portfolio. I turn to the deputy chair for his first question.

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the shadow minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: I acknowledge the traditional owners and welcome again staff members and senior officers from the department as well as the minister and DG. My first question is to the Family Responsibilities Commissioner. Could Ms Williams come to the table, please?

Mr CRAWFORD: While Commissioner Williams is coming up, I point out that we also have Commissioner Maza here.

CHAIR: Welcome, Commissioner Maza.

Mr LANGBROEK: I refer to page 49 of the annual report and the cashless debit card. What advice, preparation and interaction with government has the commission had about the consequences of the cashless debit card removal?

Ms Williams: I would like to thank the committee for inviting me. I would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of whose country we are meeting on today and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.

The Family Responsibilities Commission is pleased that its role as an independent statutory authority has been recognised in the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Repeal of Cashless Debit Card and Other Measures) Bill 2022. I do note, however, in the short time that the FRC and indeed the public have had an opportunity to read the materials associated with the bill, the commission has only made a preliminary assessment of the bill. Consequently, the FRC has urgently sought further detail from the DSS, the Department of Social Services, in order to establish what implications the proposed changes will have on the commission's operations in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

On Monday, 1 August the FRC requested and received an urgent briefing from DSS and the commission provided feedback to the department on the proposed amendments to ensure that the decision-making processes of the FRC and the local authority of the commissioners is not undermined. The FRC will also be hosting Minister Rishworth and Assistant Minister Elliot next week as they visit Far North Queensland to meet with local commissioners and community members to hear firsthand their experiences and perspectives in relation to the transition away from the cashless debit card to other arrangements.

Mr LANGBROEK: I note there has been significant media about the potential consequences since last Thursday. By the way, my reference is to the annual report of the Family Responsibilities Commission not to the annual report of the department. My question is with reference to page 32. How many clients on voluntary income management were there in 2021-22 because I note that in your report last year it went from 24 people on VIM to 89? I think in today's paper it is 101.

Ms Williams: Is it specifically voluntary income management or total cashless debit cards?

Mr LANGBROEK: Given that they are going to be abolished, I was interested more in the fact that you had a big increase last year. I was wondering what the numbers were at the end of June 2022. I am also happy to have the quantum, if possible.

Ms Williams: I should first make clear to the committee that the social security legislation recognises income management, administered by the FRC, and also recognises the cashless debit card. The cashless debit card is the mechanism that gives effect to the FRC's orders. Our orders can either be voluntary—that is a self-referral by clients—or conditional, commonly referred to as CIM.

The latest data I have for 31 July is the Family Responsibilities Commission has cumulatively processed 352 cashless debit cards since the cashless debit card came into effect on 17 March 2021. The FRC has noticed significant increases in the willingness of clients to volunteer for income management following the introduction of the cashless debit card. The annual totals I have are, for example, in the financial year 2018-19 only 19 applications were made for voluntary income management, which was administered under the basics card. The following financial year, 2019-20, only 18 clients volunteered for income management under the basics card. For the 2020-21 financial year, which saw the transition part way through, there was an increase to 89 voluntary clients. This past financial year it has again grown. For 2021-22 a total of 126 clients had volunteered.

I am further advised by the registry that, as a point of time, the number of clients we have as of 1 August for conditional income management is 32 and for voluntary income management is 70. Point of time is important because at any time our orders can lapse or clients can make an application to the commission to amend or end them. As of Monday, 1 August, 70 voluntary income managements were in place and were valid.

Mr LANGBROEK: With reference to page 39 of the annual report, will the commissioner update the committee on the progress of interactions with the government for the FRC to receive notices from the Childrens Court relating to young offenders who might be outside community?

Ms Williams: The committee will recall that in March of this year I had the pleasure of meeting committee members and providing a briefing. During that briefing I made some submissions to the committee about the reinstatement of Youth Justice's trigger or, in other words, for the commission to be able to receive the Childrens Court notices. At that committee hearing I also provided a resolution from the Alliance of Guugu Yimithirr People of Hope Vale seeking for the FRC to commence receiving those notices.

The department commissioned an independent review of the commission's operations to inform the Queensland government as to future of the commission. It is my understanding that during the review of the FRC stakeholders, including local commissioners, used that process to provide feedback to the reviewer recommending for the FRC to resume receiving Childrens Court notices.

I also as commissioner have made a written submission to the reviewer. In the fullness of time I will provide a copy of that submission to the committee. One of my recommendations is for the Queensland government to support the FRC being able to receive the Childrens Court notices and for the appropriate amendments to be made to the legislation.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, with reference to page 9 of the financial statements of the FRC, what is the total of Queensland government funding grants to the FRC in 2022-23?

Mr CRAWFORD: The answer is \$2.48 million.

Mr LANGBROEK: With reference to page 8 of the SDS and page 41 of the annual report, how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are employed in the department, broken down between seniors and disability services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships?

Mr CRAWFORD: Just to clarify, you are looking for across the whole department and then into the two respective sections?

Mr LANGBROEK: If possible please, as percentages.

Mr CRAWFORD: My notes here indicate that in the seniors and disability services section there are 35 employees who identify, which is 2.19 per cent. In the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships section there are 72 people who identify, which is 38.92 per cent. Also, we have a

corporate and executive policy services team, which sits over both. In that there are 19 employees, or 9.27 per cent. In total across the department, that gives us a figure of 126 employees who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, which is 6.33 per cent.

Mr LANGBROEK: I want to refer to answer to question on notice No. 630. It is a recent one, Minister. I know you may not have a copy of it. It was answered on 22 July 2022. It is about the Remote Indigenous Land Infrastructure Program Office. There are a number of categories. There was a zero allocation for cultural heritage in 2021-22. My question is really about explaining why there would be zero allocation in this particular subsection given that there have been allocations in other years.

Mr CRAWFORD: I refer that to the director-general.

Mr LANGBROEK: I seek leave to table this for the benefit of the director-general.

CHAIR: The visiting member has sought leave to table a document. There being no objection, leave is granted.

Dr Sarra: Let me offer a response to your question. I can seek further clarification. Since 2019-20 it was realised that the cultural heritage related costs were not as significant as initially anticipated. As such, from 2021-22 onwards allocation for cultural heritage related costs has been incorporated into the Indigenous land use agreement program. They have come out of the RILIPO team. Some of those functions are attended to by a central team who are based in Brisbane and in other parts of Queensland and not necessarily in RILIPO but they still focus on cultural heritage activities.

Mr LANGBROEK: My question is to the minister. It is about a media release that the minister put out on 20 May with respect to Kowanyama about social reinvestment grants—\$165,000 for community night patrols. I am interested in the principle of how data may have been collected and the details of the approval process—for example, a community like this compared to other communities. I am going to refer in subsequent questions to some others that you announced only last week as well.

Mr CRAWFORD: This is an operational matter, so I am going to give that one to the director-general. I am well aware of the announcement. My recollection is that it was a grants process that the department ran of which Kowanyama was a recipient. I will hand that one to the director-general.

Dr Sarra: Social reinvestment is a key part of our investment reform which supports co-designed projects developed in collaboration with communities. There are some good examples of where we have been able to come up with more agile processes that are still within the rules but are more receptive to the interests of communities by setting about embracing local community leadership and input into decision-making about what grants are successful for execution in those communities.

There is always an expression-of-interest process to implement those programs, particularly for social reinvestment initiatives over 12 months. The department undertakes an evaluation of those social reinvestment pilot projects. There is a range of other really great programs, actually. I am really proud to say that our department worked in very close partnership with local leadership to ensure that funding was devolved from our department in a way that was receptive to the needs of local leadership.

CHAIR: I call the member for Maiwar.

Mr BERKMAN: I will ask a quick question before going to the member for South Brisbane. It is related to the question earlier from the member for South Brisbane around the disproportionately high number of disciplinary absences, and that applies equally to First Nations students. I note your answer previously that this issue does fall predominantly to Education Queensland while this department's role is more in advocacy to Education Queensland. Director-General, what sorts of representations have been made to the department about how best to address disproportionately high disciplinary absences amongst First Nations students and what kind of funding and additional programs do stakeholders consider would be most effective in addressing this?

Mr Sarra: I appreciate your acknowledgment of the context of the earlier questioning. In many ways it relates to the Closing the Gap targets, which we are all interested in. I note that the education department—I will not speak too much on their behalf—is very committed. They have engaged in various measures to embrace local community leadership for a more focused dialogue on local First Nations issues in and around education.

From our perspective, as a department we have worked very hard over the last couple of years as part of the Local Thriving Communities agenda, which sets about enabling and bringing forward local decision-making bodies and enabling voice at a local level so it can influence service delivery and service design. The example that comes to mind is the Mapoon community. It is a very neat little community and a great place to visit. There is very good, strong leadership there. They embraced the Local Thriving Communities agenda; in fact, they were the first to embrace it with some gusto.

Among their first and most immediate concerns was how schooling was done, in particular secondary schooling in Weipa. Given they have come forward as a local leadership entity, their views and that particular entity was embraced seriously. I understand that through those conversations they were able to influence how education was delivered in a way that was more in line with what they were needing as a community. From a broader perspective, it is akin to that notion of shifting beyond doing things such as Aboriginal education and Aboriginal health to people to doing things with people. We have worked extremely hard as a department to enable that Local Thriving Communities agenda, which is exactly about that.

CHAIR: We will move to the member for Cook for a question, please.

Ms LUI: Minister, I refer to page 2 of the SDS and the Cultural Heritage Act Review. Can you provide the committee with further advice on how this is proceeding?

Mr CRAWFORD: The department administers the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act as well as the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act, which are both 2003 acts. These pieces of legislation provide recognition, protection and conservation for valuable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage in Queensland. The purpose of the review of the cultural heritage acts is to examine whether the legislation is still operating as it was intended to, whether it is achieving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whether it is in line with the government's broader objective to reframe the relationship with our First Nations peoples, and whether it is consistent with the current native title landscape out there.

We commenced the review in mid-2019, with statewide public consultation reaching over 450 participants. Seventy written submissions were received and published on our website. In 2020 the department undertook targeted consultation on legislative proposals with stakeholders who provided submissions in response to the 2019 consultation paper. Key themes from the feedback included: self-determination to support the desire by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to fulfil their obligations as the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of cultural heritage; relationship building to support early and respectful engagement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, industry and government—this is around developments, mine sites and those sorts of things—and compliance to enhance the statewide compliance network and educate industry and government on the value of cultural heritage and how to recognise it, how to protect it and how to conserve it.

Further consultation was paused in 2020 due to COVID-19, as many things were, and then an options paper was publicly released from 17 December 2021 to 31 March of this year with three key reform areas: firstly, providing opportunities to improve cultural heritage protection by requiring consultation with First Nations peoples and strengthening compliance mechanisms; secondly, reframing the definitions of Aboriginal party and Torres Strait Islander party; and thirdly, promoting leadership by First Nations peoples in cultural heritage management and decision-making. More than 430 submissions and surveys were received in response to the options paper, and the government will now consider these in the development of any proposed position going forward.

I would like to note that the review is being finalised at a time of significant reform and change in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage regulation at the Commonwealth, state and territory levels. Reforms and events that have informed the development of proposals and options include the final report into the destruction of heritage sites at Juukan Gorge and cultural heritage protection frameworks in other jurisdictions. As a government, we are obviously very committed to finalising the review of the acts to ensure they continue to protect and conserve our very impressive array of cultural heritage whilst facilitating business and development activity.

Chair, I know that this is a significant topic when we talk as states, territories and the Commonwealth. The Juukan Gorge incident really sparked a renewed interest and drive across the country to make sure that things like that just cannot, and should not, happen.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, can you provide the committee with advice on how Community Enterprise Queensland supports food security and retail services in Queensland's remote and very remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

Mr CRAWFORD: Community Enterprise Queensland, CEQ, is a not-for-profit statutory body committed to providing essential goods and services to communities in the Torres Strait, the NPA and remote mainland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It provides food, household items and other retail services through a network of 19 stores under Islanders Board of Industry and Service, IBIS, branding in the NPA and Torres Strait and five supermarkets in Doomadgee, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Palm Island and Pormpuraaw. It also includes electrical, hardware and clothing stores as well as five small fuel outlets.

In locations subject to isolation during the wet season, CEQ ensures these stores are stocked with sufficient supplies of non-perishable and frozen food to cover the period, with arrangements in place to ensure that perishables can be supplied by air when roads are impassable. Doomadgee is a classic example of that. They prepare for their wet season very significantly in that community. In consideration of the cost-of-living impacts on many of its customers, CEQ provides shoppers with choice, including economy, standard and premium ranges, with the aim of keeping goods affordable. It continues to place an emphasis on products that support health and wellbeing in communities by subsidising fresh fruit, milk, eggs and core basket essentials to keep prices low. The continuing impact of COVID has required that CEQ keep its staffing and supply arrangements under continual review to ensure that stores can remain operational and fully stocked. In remote locations rising fuel prices are causing concerns, and CEQ has attempted to keep these prices as low as possible.

CEQ is one of the largest employers of First Nations people in Queensland's remote communities: 92 per cent of the 120 staff on Palm Island, Lockhart River, Doomadgee, Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw stores are First Nations people; and 90 per cent of staff across IBIS grocery locations in the Torres Strait are First Nations people. This employment makes a significant positive contribution to the economic welfare of families in those communities. When you go into the supermarkets in those communities you often see young people working there. They are very proud to work in their communities. It is a great place for people to start their employment career.

Ms LUI: Minister, can you update the committee on how the Queensland government is working to strengthen and preserve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages?

Mr CRAWFORD: This is a very important topic. This year marks the commencement of the United Nations International Decade of Indigenous Languages. The Palaszczuk government recognises that language is an integral part of culture and we are continuing to deliver a range of initiatives to strengthen and preserve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's languages. Preserving Indigenous language is also central to truth telling and supporting oral history, which is a key component of our Path to Treaty.

To recognise the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in maintaining cultural identities and building the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, we launched the Many Voices: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy in 2020. As a whole-of-government policy developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups, it delivers on target 2.5 of the Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2022, which is to 'Grasp unique opportunities to respect Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, lands, histories and rights'. Across government, we are working to embed respect and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language in the everyday business of government through the Many Voices action plan.

The Indigenous Languages Grants program complements the Languages Policy and it is an initiative under the Indigenous Languages Action Plan. Since 2019 the government has invested \$700,000 into the Indigenous Languages Grants program, funding 91 community based language initiatives to teach, revive, promote and preserve those unique languages. Last year the government invested \$400,000 to preserve, maintain and celebrate languages through the Indigenous Languages Grants program and we will continue to fund that program into coming years.

Since launching the program, the government has supported Indigenous languages projects across the state, from Badu Island to Goondiwindi, from Torquay to Barcaldine and up to the Wellesley Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Through the Languages Policy, the action plan and the Indigenous Languages Grants program, the government is working to achieve target 16 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap for 'sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken' by the year 2031.

Past government policies saw Indigenous people moved on to missions, having a devastating impact on the languages spoken. We are committed to undoing the wrong of the past through truth telling and healing. Key to that is to revive, promote and reconnect people to Indigenous languages.

CHAIR: Minister, my question relates to SDS page 5. Could you please explain how the Queensland government is responding to Voice to Government?

Mr CRAWFORD: From the outset can I say that I was moved by the speech given by our Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, at the Garma Festival in the Northern Territory last week. Our national government is taking decisive steps to establish a body called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice and to recognise in the Constitution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first peoples of Australia. The Palaszczuk government is also strongly committed to providing Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders with a greater voice on the issues that impact them and their lives. We know that providing greater input and control for First Nations people over decisions that affect them is strongly connected to the positive wellbeing outcomes and can significantly help address existing challenges within communities.

In May 2021 the Queensland government publicly released a response to the Indigenous voice co-design process interim report to the Australian government. The response committed to moving forward Indigenous Voice reform in Queensland through further co-design work with First Nations Queenslanders. To enable this, the First Nations Consultative Committee has been established to progress Indigenous Voice in Queensland and advise the Queensland government on how Voice co-design work in Queensland could inform the national Voice reform. The establishment of the committee builds on the government's commitment to reframe the relationship with First Nations Queenslanders and reaffirms the Palaszczuk government's commitment to the momentum building across our nation as we work towards voice, treaty and truth.

The committee will work with and listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state. The feedback from community will help inform the recommendations on Queensland's preferred Indigenous Voice model. This will include looking at a range of Voice options, such as the establishment of a statewide representative body. The committee will provide its advice and recommendations for the Queensland government's consideration next year. I look forward to receiving that advice so we can move closer to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a voice and input into a policy that impacts them in a meaningful and powerful way.

To summarise, the Commonwealth are working on their Voice, but what has been very clear is that the states and territories will have a role to play in this as well. Queensland wants to make sure that we can work alongside them. This is not about competing with or duplicating but working alongside our other territories and states and the Commonwealth to ensure there can be a Voice to Brisbane and a Voice to the Queensland government as well as Canberra.

CHAIR: That is a nice segue to the member for Nicklin, who I know has an interest in treaty.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, referring to SDS page 5, can you update the committee on how Path to Treaty is progressing in Queensland? I concur with your sentiments on our current Prime Minister.

Mr CRAWFORD: I am pleased to provide an update to the committee on how Path to Treaty is progressing here in Queensland. The Path to Treaty is a journey to create a new future between First Nations Queenslanders and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. It is a significant step forward in reframing the relationship with First Nations peoples—a process through which all Queenslanders can recognise Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people as the oldest living cultures on the planet and the first peoples of the land, winds and waters we all share.

The Palaszczuk Labor government started the Path to Treaty conversation with Queenslanders in 2019, with truth telling and healing at the heart of this dialogue. One of the key points we have emphasised throughout the process so far is that treaty in Queensland is a conversation for all Queenslanders.

Phase 1 of the treaty process commenced with the establishment of the Eminent Panel to lead the public consultation process on what a treaty or treaties might mean to all Queenslanders. During phase 1 there was a high interest in engagement in the 2019 community consultation phase. This engagement involved the Eminent Panel and Treaty Working Group conducting public consultation across Queensland from September to December 2019. This was attended by more than 1,000 people in 24 locations. It also included many survey responses and written responses.

Phase 2 began in 2021 with the establishment of the Treaty Advancement Committee. The Treaty Advancement Committee's role was to build on the work done by the Eminent Panel and the Treaty Working Group and provide advice to government on the next steps in greater detail. The Treaty Advancement Committee delivered its report detailing the recommended design of the key structures to take the Path to Treaty forward in October 2021. The Queensland government has carefully considered the recommendations of the Treaty Advancement Committee and has developed a response.

Much work has occurred in readiness for the next steps. Part of that has been the public expression of interest for an independent interim body to continue to co-design our Path to Treaty. The Queensland government cannot walk the path to treaty alone, and I am pleased to say that over 100 applications were received. I am confident that a diverse panel will be put together to walk alongside us for the next 12 to 18 months. I encourage all those who were not successful in this round to look out for the many upcoming opportunities to participate in the treaty process.

As government we have an obligation to ensure policies and programs across government are in line with the objectives of treaty. To start this work, my department has also been leading conversations across all Queensland government agencies about becoming treaty ready for treaty and truth telling. The Premier and Minister for the Olympics and I will jointly announce the next steps in our treaty journey on 16 August 2022 right here at Parliament House. I look forward to sharing the Treaty Advancement Committee report and the exciting next steps of this journey that we are taking together.

In closing, whilst I cannot go into the details of those next steps because I do not want to steal the Premier's thunder, I can say that the team behind me have done an outstanding amount of work in particularly the last six to eight months in pulling together the work from the Treaty Advancement Committee and then turning that into, in the words of Mick Gooda, where we are about to start 'doing stuff'.

CHAIR: I will turn to the deputy chair.

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the member for South Brisbane.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, also with regard to the Cultural Heritage Act review: will the government within this review be taking seriously issues raised in the context of Magazine Hill and Deebing Creek particularly with regards to intangible cultural heritage?

Mr CRAWFORD: The short answer is yes. We know that those two examples you mentioned—and there are others out there as well—have created significant divide amongst family members amongst traditional owners as well. It is one of the complex histories of this state where we have areas of this state where it is not easy to actually determine straight up and down who is a traditional owner, who is not, and all those different levels. That is why we have some of those complex areas, particularly Deebing Creek, as I know you are well aware. It is our intention to try to rectify that, or better that in this process. It is something that has been quite difficult, I think, for a lot of our traditional owners working under that part of the legislation. A lot of people referenced the 'last claim standing' and obviously at the time that was seen to be the best way. We need to find out if there is a better way of being able to appropriately give people the rights that they have as native title holders, but also to be able to respectfully acknowledge everyone as we go forward. The short answer is yes.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, the Queensland government has protected Torres Strait Islander traditional child rearing practices in law. Are there any measures being taken to implement legislation that similarly protects Aboriginal child rearing practices?

Mr CRAWFORD: There has been nothing formally yet, but there have been some conversations, I know, amongst some of the Aboriginal community stakeholders out there. I know that some elders have mentioned it to me in different parts around the state. There has not been any formal work done on that, but certainly the Meriba Omasker work shows that a government can incorporate lore into law, so I think the precedent is set, but there have not been any formal approaches to us.

As we did with the Torres Strait Islanders, we would rely in that situation on where senior leaders and elders step forward and come to government and say, 'We want you to address this particular thing,' but we have not had anything formal that I am aware of yet. We will look at it as it comes forward. The other thing we will need to check on is whether there is consistency across Queensland. The Torres Strait Islander community essentially is geographically a smaller part. We would need to make sure, if we were going to bring on any sort of legal framework that allowed a similar approach across the Aboriginal peoples of Queensland, that we could reflect all Aboriginal peoples because there might be some differing things that occur across the state. The short answer is we are open to it, we are up for it, but we would be looking for that leadership to step forward to us.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, I understand there is a line item in the department's budget titled 'Indigenous Policy' or perhaps 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy'; is this the case?

Mr CRAWFORD: Can you give us more detail where it is in the SDS so we might be able to find it?

Dr MacMAHON: No, it is not in the SDS. The question is: is there an allocation of budget specifically for policy that might not show up in the SDS?

Mr CRAWFORD: I will refer that to the director-general.

Dr Sarra: We do have it reflected. Let me get the right page. As I search for that right page, we have separated out the elements of the department so that we can have more meaningful structure to our budget and more meaningful structure to this SDS. If you look at page 8, there are two distinct service areas—one is 'Seniors and Disability Services' and the next line is 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Services'. So there are two elements to the delivery of Indigenous or First Nations services in our department.

Again, primarily we are structured as a department to be able to influence other departments so that we can enable the Department of Education to do First Nations education better, and so that we can enable Queensland Health to do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health better by way of the connections. When we come back internally to the two structures within the Indigenous policy sort of frame, there are those of my colleagues who work centrally on things like the Local Thriving Communities agenda, the Path to Treaty agenda, the enabling Voice, the economic participation, the family histories—those teams tend to sit centrally—and then we have outposted FTEs who I often refer to as our community connectors right across Queensland, and their role is to be advocates for communities and be that kind of locking-on point to government, so that there is no wrong door for Indigenous folks in communities.

I am really proud of the role that those folks play. I know that there has been a shift away from doing the programs type activity in the past to a more facilitating, brokering, influencing role, and my colleagues have adjusted to that really well and they are enthusiastic about what we can achieve in the future as part of that reframed relationship and enabling Voice at a local community level, and the minister referred to enabling Voice at a more statewide level.

Mr LANGBROEK: Director-General, I refer to the department's website. Under 'Local Thriving Communities Grants', reducing the rate of suicide is mentioned. Has the department had any interaction with 13YARN, the first national service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in crisis?

Dr Sarra: I will seek the specifics of your line of inquiry through my department. To the best of my knowledge and judging by the look on my colleague's face, probably not specifically, but obviously suicide is an area that we are very deeply concerned about and very keen to play our role in addressing. Under the department's social and emotional wellbeing program, the government allocated almost \$5.4 million over four years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth mental health with a—

Mr CRAWFORD: Chair, if I can butt in, the committee is probably not aware of this, but—

Dr Sarra: It is ok. It is fine.

Mr CRAWFORD:—Dr Sarra had an event like this only a couple of days ago, so it is pretty hard on him.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am sorry to hear that. It was just a general inquiry, so—

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise, I know you well and I would suggest that you would agree to move on.

Mr LANGBROEK: Sure, no problem. I would like to move on to an issue that the director-general referred to about Local Thriving Communities with regard to Mapoon in the last section of government questions, and it is an article in the *Midwest Times* from Marty Silk where the minister is quoted, Madam Chair. I have 10 copies and I would seek leave to have that tabled, please.

CHAIR: The visiting member the member for Surfers Paradise has sought leave to table a newspaper article by the *Midwest Times*. Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr LANGBROEK: I would like the minister to see it because it is really about the trials in Yarrabah and Mapoon, which is what I was asking when the director-general referred to it earlier. I wondered if I could ask about the budget details of those trials and a general briefing of the committee about what is mentioned in there including what was the proof of success. The minister mentions potential savings in those communities as well as the 24 other communities. It is more of a briefing about the principle that we could potentially save money. I would like to know how much the department spent doing the trials and the interaction with the local community, which the director-general mentioned, in Mapoon, which is a very proactive community. It is a general briefing question, Minister.

CHAIR: Minister, are you happy to respond?

Mr CRAWFORD: Sure. Thank you for the question. There were a couple of components. The first one was around the numbers. This would come out of a bucket of allocation that we have. It is \$80.1 million over four years. This is about reducing the incidence of suicide under the Shifting Minds suicide prevention flagship. Under our department's social and emotional wellbeing program we have allocated just on \$5.4 million over four years. That is to help with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth mental health and obviously it aligns with other actions within Shifting Minds. The Queensland Mental Health Commission has also contributed \$1.5 million to that. Obviously some of these things are coming from other agencies as well and even the Commonwealth. You asked particularly around Mapoon—

Mr LANGBROEK: And Yarrabah. Minister, can I just clarify? I am asking about general service delivery reforms. It is about the two specific areas of Yarrabah and Mapoon which are quoted as a potential example of something that we are going to put into 24 other communities as well. It is really

asking about some of the principles there. It said money could be saved, so I thought, 'That will mean there will be less money spent in community. What will community think about that?' It is more about those other things I have already asked such as how much it would cost to do it, what is the proof of success et cetera.

Mr CRAWFORD: I think it is fair to say that, through the Local Thriving Communities work, this is about encouraging and capability building around local decision-making. I think it is fair to say that Mapoon and Yarrabah certainly are two leading and outstanding communities. At Yarrabah they have the Yarrabah Leaders Forum. If the committee is ever in Yarrabah, that would be an excellent organisation to meet with. It is a combination of leaders and some of the service agencies in Yarrabah. It is chaired by the mayor, Ross Andrews. In Mapoon they also have progressed very well on a local decision-making body, and that is also chaired by their mayor. Mayors obviously clearly have a lead role in this. The reference to those two communities will be because of their leadership in the Local Thriving Communities space. Not every community is at the same level, but Yarrabah and Mapoon are very much embracing it.

When we talk about saving money, more transparency and those sorts of things, one thing that comes to us all the time out of communities is that communities do not have oversight of this—who is doing what, spending what and visiting in the communities. It is something that the mayor on Mornington island has been very vocal about—and rightly so. Just about all of the community leaders have been as well. When we talk about service delivery, some of that is coming from our government agency, some is coming from the Commonwealth and some is also coming from private providers.

We are embarking on work to try to rein that in to get to a point where local decision-making bodies such as Mapoon and Yarrabah can have more say in and control over who is doing what in their patch. We know there is a lot of money that comes out of treasuries, but it does not make it all the way to the ground. It gets caught up in corporate towers and those sorts of things across the country. The communities want to see more transparency, and the local decision-making body is part of that.

This is an example. It is very early days. I do not think we have a direct budget line or numbers on it. However, if we can get this kind of work to be successful where a community decision-making body can actually start standing up and telling the government, 'This is what we want. This is how we want to deliver services in our patch,' whether it is mental health or something else, that is what we are working towards. That has been the decision of cabinet. That is certainly government policy. It is not a new thing; it has been a thing for a couple of years. We still have a way to go on the ground. Some of these communities have long and deep issues. Their trust of government in some places is not that high. Those two communities you mentioned are very much leading the way—Yarrabah especially and Mapoon.

CHAIR: Member, we have time for another question.

Mr LANGBROEK: Following on from my query about the social reinvestment grant press release for Kowanyama, I want to ask about the recent announcements from the Social and Emotional Wellbeing program. There were five announcements on 8 July. I am asking whether the process is different for the Social and Emotional Wellbeing program compared to the social reinvestment grants. I do not mind whether it is the director-general or the minister who can inform the committee please.

Dr Sarra: I am happy to—

Mr CRAWFORD: I will give that one to the director-general. It is an operational matter.

Dr Sarra: I am happy to lead off. The process would be similar. The difference in terms of where we are at as a department is that we are better placed now to embrace a local community voice. If I can add to the minister's earlier comments, what is clear in this policy space is that money is not the issue—or the amount of money. There is opportunity to make savings. All of us are frustrated that we have spent lots and lots of dollars and seemingly are not getting the results we hoped for. We are just as frustrated as communities, and communities are frustrated about this. Part of the reason for that, frankly, is that there is often overlap.

The minister spoke earlier about the money not landing in communities but also people turning up in communities to perform the same functions; the only difference is that one is funded by the state and one is funded by the Commonwealth. Money is not the issue. We are setting about embracing the local community voice because they will have a better sense of—and we owe it to them as a government—transparency and accountability because it is their communities. Where they see duplication they tell us as government, 'Stop funding that because that has already been done,' and, 'Put more into this' or, 'Yes, that might be in line with your priorities, but our priorities at a local level are

this, this and this.’ The Local Thriving Communities initiative is designed to—in many ways I think we will save money but ultimately ensure the money is spent more efficiently and in line with what the communities are asking for.

In terms of the processes and the \$1.13 million for the five community-led initiatives, again, as I suggested earlier, they will be identified through an expression-of-interest process. There are some really good stories to talk about, but I will not list them individually. Rest assured they would come about as a result of dialogue where communities have input into how those dollars should be spent.

CHAIR: Minister, could you provide an update on what work is underway to strengthen and promote local decision-making, following on from the comments and questions of the member for Surfers Paradise? What processes are underway to strengthen and promote local decision-making in remote and discrete communities to improve service delivery? It relates specifically to SDS page 2.

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question, which leads on from the previous questions. Clearly, as a government, we are committed to partnering with community leaders, with Indigenous councils and with other stakeholders to co-design services and to bring decision-making closer to Queensland’s First Nations communities. The Local Thriving Communities reform is about engaging in a mutual, high-expectations relationship to ensure service design and service delivery aligns with community priorities, such as those just referred to by the DG.

Through this reform, the government is enabling First Nations communities to make decisions about their own future, to build on their strengths as a community and to invest in the things that will make communities stronger and make a difference to people’s lives. Interim local decision-making bodies are currently established in Mapoon, Napranum, Aurukun, Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal. These local decision-making bodies embrace existing strengths in community, including council members and community representatives who are guiding decisions and building the local decision-making framework for their communities. Leadership models are also progressing in several other communities including Woorabinda, Palm Island, Kowanyama, Doomadgee, Pormpuraaw, Coen and Yarrabah.

Local decision-making bodies are working directly with Queensland government agencies to co-design services that will improve community wellbeing and enhance government investment. For example, improvements have been made to a policing model in Mapoon as a direct result of the Queensland Police Service working in partnership with Mapoon’s interim local decision-making body. This includes appointing a local Police Liaison Officer and building further positive relationships with the community. This is an example of where Queensland police have started to use this model. They have spoken to the Mapoon community, they know who to speak to and there is a co-design of what policing in Mapoon might look like.

Communities are provided funding to support leadership development, for community engagement and to progress their leadership model and community priorities. Their co-design Local Thriving Communities action plan is guiding the necessary government reforms and cultural capability that is required to support local decision-making. This includes investment mapping and data sharing to ensure that service delivery is more effectively delivered in communities—a bit like what we were referring to in the last few questions with the amount of money.

The government has demonstrated its commitment to local decision-making through funding commitments. This includes investing in social and emotional wellbeing, domestic and family violence prevention and social reinvestment initiatives that engage local leadership in their design and delivery. LTC’s social reinvestment funding encourages communities to identify a local need or concern and to implement local actions to address the issue. In 2022-23, five communities are receiving up to \$165,000 each towards locally-led community night patrols, youth hubs and school holiday programs to support youth engagement and to address youth crime.

The renewed approach to alcohol management is also strengthening and promoting local decision-making by funding actions identified in co-designed community safety plans in response to local needs. Through LTC’s renewed approach to alcohol management, communities with alcohol restrictions are receiving \$335,000 each over three years towards locally-led strategies to improve community safety and wellbeing, reduce alcohol demand, address sly grog and home brew and promote a positive alcohol culture. Through these reforms, we are starting to see how by working together, we can ensure government services are coordinated, meet the needs of communities and improve outcomes for First Nations Queenslanders.

CHAIR: Thank you minister. Thank you for providing those particular examples; it is very helpful. I turn to the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Minister, the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020 came into force on 1 July 2021 and Budget Paper 4 outlines for further budget commitments. Can you update the committee on progress since implementation began, and what this means for Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you for the question. Given the time of the day, and given that he has not had a run yet, I am going to bring the commissioner onto the ground. He would be in a perfect position to be able to give the committee an update.

CHAIR: Thank you, commissioner and welcome.

Commissioner Maza: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the committee for the opportunity to give a brief to the committee members. My name is C'Zarke Maza, the commissioner for the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa. I thank the member for Cook for your question. Before I commence, I would like to first acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I also give a special acknowledgement to other First Nations people who are here today.

In answer to the question, I will start by saying that the Palaszczuk government, in fulfilment of its 2017 election promise, introduced and implemented the historic and world-first Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020, which came into effect on 1 July.

Since my appointment as the commissioner on 12 July 2021, I have overseen the official opening of the Office of the Commissioner in Cairns on 10 August 2021. With the establishment of the program support office, once it was fully staffed, this office has been assisting Torres Strait Islander families to make applications for cultural recognition orders and supporting me with the implementation of the act. There have been many significant steps that have been undertaken by the program support office and myself in promoting and raising awareness about the legislation among Torres Strait Islander families and communities and in supporting families in making those applications for cultural recognition orders, which is a world first.

To date, I am pleased to say that hundreds of Torres Strait Islander people have been assisted with their inquiries by the Office of the Commissioner and the program support office. Since September of 2021—when applications were officially opened—we have six cultural recognition orders that have been granted, six more are currently lodged with the department are being processed and another seven are currently being prepared and supported for lodgement. Once a Cultural Recognition Order is granted, a new birth certificate can be issued and the transfer of parentage of the subject person to the cultural parents is legally recognised in western law. I can attest that this process has been life-changing for Torres Strait Islander families and their children. This is invaluable work, and a testament to the Palaszczuk government's commitment to reframing its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This act will mean that children and adults who have grown up under Ailan Kastom with their cultural parents will finally have their cultural identity marry up with their legal identity. It is anticipated that applications will steadily increase, as community awareness and confidence in the scheme grows. The Queensland government is committed to continuing to support Torres Strait Islander peoples to have their legal identity reflect their lived experience. I am proud that the Queensland government recognises the outcomes of this secret and sacred customary practice, and now has the mechanisms in place to reflect this for Torres Strait Islander peoples in western law.

To ensure the act is operating as it was originally intended and to provide opportunity for processes and implementation improvements, the government has committed to a review of the operations of the legislation by July 2023. Further, I would add that there have been strong relationships that have been built over time with the department and the Kupai Omasker Working Party. Over 35 years, this group has tirelessly advocated for the introduction of this legislation. These members now form part of the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa Advisory Group which is working with government and myself to implement the act. The advisory group will also inform, as part of the review, about the operations of this act.

CHAIR: Minister, I am aware that there was a question taken on notice earlier.

Mr CRAWFORD: The director-general has the response. I think it is the only question outstanding.

CHAIR: That is right.

Dr Sarra: My apologies that I could not get this answer to you earlier. I will just restate the question, for everybody's benefit. You asked how many fraud and corruption control referrals were received in 2021-22 and whether these can be broken down by corruption or misconduct, areas within the department and findings. The fraud and corruption control committee does not have a role in accepting referrals, but I can advise the committee that during the 2021-22 period the department received the following conduct referrals which go specifically to your question. There were 31 suspected corrupt conduct referrals. In the SDS area of our department there were 28 referrals; in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships area there were two referrals; and in the corporate services area there was one referral. I can report that, of those 31 matters, 13 have been finalised. There were 82 suspected misconduct referrals. In the SDS area there were 77 referrals; in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships area there were five referrals; and there were zero referrals in the corporate area. Sixty-eight of those 82 matters have been finalised. A further 18 matters were received but did not reach the threshold as corrupt conduct or misconduct, including one which remained in assessment as at 30 June 2022.

CHAIR: Thank you. Given the time allocated for the consideration of the estimates this afternoon is about to expire, I will hand to the minister to make a couple of closing remarks. Then we will close this part of the hearing.

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chair. Before my closing remarks, I do want to correct the record. I used an incorrect figure in the previous session. It was around the public sector employment of people with disability. I used the September 2021 figure of 3.25 per cent; I should have used the March 2022 figure, which is 3.31 per cent—a little bit higher. I just wanted to correct that.

Chair, thank you to you, to your committee, to your guest members—the members for Surfers Paradise and South Brisbane—and to all of your committee staff and the parliamentary staff who have supported today's hearing. I know that you are not there yet but it is not long to go. I take the opportunity to thank the very hardworking members of my department, the seniors and disability services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships team, my director-general and his staff for the work they do across this great state—not just for the work that they do in preparing for today's estimates but for the ongoing hard work across the commitment to all Queenslanders. I acknowledge and thank my ministerial staff for the work that has gone into today.

I believe it is a privilege to be able to work in this important portfolio. It is one that helps Queenslanders. It ensures that Queenslanders of all ages, abilities and cultures have the opportunity to succeed culturally, socially and economically, and it is an honour to be their minister. Again, I want to confirm that the Queensland government's next steps on Path to Treaty will be announced here at Parliament House on 16 August. I am sure that the committee will be invited to that. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Minister. The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolios of seniors, disability services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships has expired. Minister, the committee thanks you, your department officers and the commissioners for your attendance this afternoon. The committee will now adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 3.30 pm with the examination of the estimates for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Good afternoon.

Proceedings suspended from 3.14 pm to 3.30 pm.

ESTIMATES—COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE— CHILDREN AND YOUTH JUSTICE; MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

In Attendance

Hon. LM Linard, Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Ms B Condren, Chief of Staff

Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

Ms D Mulkerin, Director-General

Mr W Briscoe, Executive Director, Multicultural Affairs

 **CHAIR:** Good afternoon, everyone. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2022 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio until 6.15 pm and will suspend proceedings during this time for a short break from 5.15 pm to 5.30 pm. As was determined by the House, the committee will consider the minister's portfolios as follows: children and youth justice from 3.30 pm to 5.15 pm and multicultural affairs from 5.30 pm to 6.15 pm. I remind honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can be raised only during the times specified for the area, as was agreed to by the House.

The following non-committee members have sought and been granted leave to participate in the hearing in accordance with standing orders: members for Broadwater, Buderim, Chatsworth, Everton, Glass House, Kawana, Maroochydore, Moggill, Scenic Rim, South Brisbane, Surfers Paradise and Whitsunday. I particularly acknowledge the member for Whitsunday. I understand the member for Surfers Paradise may return. Welcome, member for Whitsunday.

I remind those present today that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and subject to the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in the Legislative Assembly apply during 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, arguments or opinion. I as chair intend to guide 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 alike who are members of the committee.

I also wish to reiterate to all those participating in today's hearing of the sentiment of Mr Speaker's ruling of 30 July 2018 when he recognised the importance of maintaining the dignity of the estimates process in terms of questioning, general behaviour and adherence to standing orders. Last week Mr Speaker reminded all members that the estimates process was created to ensure that proper scrutiny occurs and that people responsible for various portfolios are provided the opportunity to answer questions. Standing order 185 in relation to disorderly members further determines the conduct of parliamentarians during the estimates process. I will exercise this standing order as required to ensure that our behaviour today reflects our community's expectations. I encourage everyone here today to wear face masks while in the chamber and remind members and officials to remove face masks when speaking. I further remind those present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at the discretion of me as chair or by order of the committee.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the minister, the Hon. Leanne Linard, the director-general—welcome, Director-General—officials and members of the public to the hearing. For the benefit of Hansard I ask officials 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 areas of children, youth justice and multicultural affairs open for examination. The question before the committee this afternoon is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

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

Ms LINARD: Thank you, Chair. I would like to start by honouring the traditional owners of the land on which we gather today, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging and I pay my respects to those First Nations

people in the room here today. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to participate in the committee's hearing this afternoon. It is an opportunity to scrutinise our government's investment in supporting vulnerable children, young people and families and to share the important work undertaken by the dedicated staff in the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.

I am always humbled by those I meet while travelling around the state, whether it is frontline child safety officers, youth detention centre staff, foster and kinship carers, cultural leaders, our partners in the non-government sector or survivors of historical abuse. Each has a story and every one of them is helping to make a difference in the lives of Queenslanders. They are helping to keep children safe, divert young people from offending, create a vibrant multicultural Queensland and ensuring that we never forget the hurts of past practices.

The 2022-23 state budget recognises the continuing and in some areas growing need to build stronger and safer communities and families and will invest a record \$2.3 billion in child and family services, youth justice and multicultural affairs. Much of the work of my agency is challenging. Many Queensland families are facing complex challenges, including domestic and family violence, substance abuse, mental health and intergenerational trauma. Sadly, we have seen a rise in the number of children and young people coming into contact with the department. More than 130,000 intakes were received in the year to 31 March 2022. That is one every four minutes. While demand is finally stabilising following a rapid increase during COVID-19, the need for child protection services remains high. We have recognised that need. Additional funding in this budget includes \$2.2 billion over five years and \$500 million per annum ongoing for out-of-home care and \$75 million over four years to go towards youth justice strategy reforms.

The child safety system we have now is more robust than the system we inherited in 2015. The department has made extensive changes to help ensure more children are protected and safe from harm. That work and reform continues. Vulnerable children deserve no less. In this year's budget I was proud to make an historic commitment on behalf of our government to support young people leaving care up to the age of 21. From 1 July 2023 young people will receive ongoing financial support and access to a personal support worker as they navigate their transition to adulthood. This historic reform belongs to young people with lived experience of the child safety system. It was their voices that called most loudly for this reform and it was their stories that I will never forget.

In the year ahead we remain focused on our reforms to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the child safety system. Queensland has one of the lowest rates of over-representation in Australia, but at 44 per cent our rate remains unacceptable. Our aim is for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to have services delivered by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled sector within 10 years. We are also focused on improving out-of-home care options and working hard to see the number of children and young people cared for by kin significantly increased. I would like to acknowledge the dedicated passion of our carers across Queensland. Without them the system could not operate. I likewise honour the tremendous contribution of our partners in the non-government sector and our frontline staff. Much of our work is done quietly and respectfully inside families' homes.

All Queenslanders deserve to be safe in their homes and communities and all Queenslanders expect young people to be law abiding. When they are not we expect them to be accountable and supported to make positive decisions. Over the past 10 years we have seen a 30 per cent decrease in the number of young offenders in Queensland. Young people make up a decreasing percentage of all offenders. While these statistics are positive they are cold comfort to anyone who has been a victim of crime. We are focused here in Queensland, and indeed across the country, on a core group of serious and persistent offenders. Last year we amended the Youth Justice Act to introduce tough new measures that have seen more repeat offenders held in custody and for longer. We will continue to make our investments in supporting these young people to break the cycle and keep our communities safe.

Finally, to our multicultural state. August is multicultural month and it provides us with an opportunity to promote and recognise Queensland as a unified, harmonious and inclusive place to call home. This year's theme is 'inclusion in action' and will focus on practical action Queenslanders can take to contribute to cross-cultural connection, belonging and cohesive local communities. I encourage all Queenslanders to take part in celebrations in their local communities. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure for the children and youth justice portfolio. I call the deputy chair.

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the shadow minister.

Ms CAMM: Good afternoon, Chair, committee, Minister and all those present. My first question is to the director-general. Approximately how many outstanding investigations and assessments are there in the south-east region yet to be finalised?

Ms Mulkerin: I am likely to have to see if we can answer that specifically before the end of the session. As the member is aware and as the minister called out, we receive some 130,000 reports, calls and pieces of information across the state every year. Around 100,000 children are known to us every year and every year we undertake around 30,000 notifications across the state. I will need to take advice about the specific numbers for the south-east.

Ms CAMM: Are you happy for that to be taken on notice?

CHAIR: Minister, are you taking that question on notice?

Ms LINARD: I am sure we can come back to the member during the hearing. We will look for those numbers and if we do not have them we will.

Ms CAMM: I have a subsequent question that may be required to be taken on notice. I have information where, I believe, it is around 1,000. Director-General, of those that are outstanding, how many would have been outstanding for more than 100 days? That is specific to the south-east region.

Ms Mulkerin: That is a very specific question so we will see if we can get that information before the end of the session.

Ms CAMM: Minister, I have data from the Australian government's Productivity Commission— noting that Queensland no longer has one so I refer to the Australian government—with regard to statistics around response times to complete investigations. I note that we are the second lowest state to commence an investigation or complete an investigation—second only to Tasmania, which is currently under a commission of inquiry into child safety. I have documents that I can table if the minister would like me to. What action is being taken to increase response times and improve time frames around completing investigations?

Ms LINARD: There are a couple of points I would make there. Firstly, I want to acknowledge the significant additional demand pressures—and I know that you are aware of that, member—that we have experienced during COVID. The increase in calls for service to this agency has been quite extraordinary. Importantly, the response is that we are investing in more frontline staff. In last year's budget we announced an additional 154 staff because, at the end of the day, having more people on the ground to be doing the work is the only real and important response. We continue to bolster our frontline staff and support staff because we want to focus, obviously, on what those case loads are. We have seen those case loads come back down to 16 on average.

I think the other important factor here is: my understanding is that Queensland is the only jurisdiction to investigate all matters that come before the department. Other jurisdictions measure that differently; they do not necessarily, depending on which tier it is. I will hand to the director-general in regard to 24-hour investigations specifically.

Ms Mulkerin: The minister is correct: Queensland, by law, is required to investigate every report that we get. That is certainly not the case in other jurisdictions. As the member might be aware, I worked for seven years in New South Wales. I was responsible for the child protection system in New South Wales so I know that very intimately.

The minister has already called out that for the year ending 31 March 2022 there were 31,244 notifications, which represented an 11.3 per cent increase from the previous year. That is really, we think, mostly a result of COVID. Of that, 4,098 were assigned a 24-hour response. In our work, 24-hour responses are those that are deemed the most urgent and the most critical to action within that really urgent time frame. The latest data available for 31 March 2022 shows that the percentage of notifications that were commenced within that time frame for the 24-hour responses was 93.6 per cent.

Our overall numbers are very different from other states because we run a different system and we have a different way of categorising them and responding to them. The ones that are the most critical, the most urgent, that we really should get out the door as quickly as we can and assess risk and safety and danger are those 24-hour matters. Of those, as I said, we have a response rate of 93.6 per cent.

Ms CAMM: Director-General, given your response around response rates, do you measure and what are the statistics around the completion rate of those inquiries? You talk about the response within 24 hours, but when you undertake an investigation, when you respond and you assess, what is the time frame and the percentage completion rate, on average?

Ms Mulkerin: You are quite right: there are lots of different ways in which we measure this and there are lots of different ways in which we track this work. We track the trends of work coming in the door and the trends about where it is distributed across the state. Certainly the commencement for us is an important measure because, particularly for the 24-hour ones, they are the ones that we want to give our priority to. We absolutely track completions. We track substantiations by region. Our service delivery areas track all of that because all of that is important.

I am the first to say that we are a system that is always under pressure. There is always a lot of demand and we are always prioritising the work that we give highest priority to. In this piece of the work, it is always that 24-hour response time.

Ms CAMM: I have a subsequent question in relation to those investigations completed. Director-General, is there a measure that you can provide around the very urgent assessments that you outlined in the 24-hour response in terms of the average time that it takes to complete those investigations? While you commence within 24 hours, I am more interested in the assessment and the completion of the risk assessment of those children—some 4,000, as you mentioned, in the past 12 months.

Ms Mulkerin: We will see if we can get the completion data before the end of the period, but I would make the comment that we do allow quite a bit of time for the completion. All states do this slightly differently. We mark the end of the investigation often when there has been quite a bit of work so it is not just the initial assessment. Often there is time when we start to engage with the family, we might engage schools and we might engage other support agencies. For us, often it is the beginning of ongoing work with families. Whilst we do definitely capture the point at which the assessment is finalised, that end date often does not reflect the fact that we have been doing lots of work with the family, which in fact is the most important thing.

CHAIR: Thank you, Director-General. Member, do you have a further question?

Ms CAMM: I do, Madam Chair. I have lots of questions today. Director-General, in the past financial year, how many times has the department sought independent expert advice from Crown Law with regard to the disciplinary processes as per the Coroner's recommendations as a result of the Mason Jett Lee case?

CHAIR: Director-General, I am happy for you to respond to that question as you see fit.

Ms Mulkerin: As the member is referencing one of the recommendations that came out of one of the many reviews that occurred around Mason Jett Lee, this was another look at the disciplinary matters in relation to staff who were involved at the time. One of those recommendations, as you have called out, was asking the department to work alongside our colleagues in the Public Service Commission and Crown Law and seeking advice about any sort of disciplinary matters that we have ongoing. To give life to that recommendation, we set up regular meetings with Crown Law and used that as an opportunity to use the expertise and the external expertise of Crown Law to look at all of the matters that were underway for our department.

Ms CAMM: Is that ongoing or is it specific? Is there a number that you can speak to of specific times the department has to seek actual advice, or is it an ongoing activity in that the department undertakes monthly meetings or review processes?

Ms Mulkerin: Yes, we use it as an opportunity to discuss with them all of the matters that we had on hand. It was an opportunity too good to miss, really, about having some independent oversight and using some independent expertise about any of our disciplinary matters. It was an ongoing matter. I would note, though, that recently the Public Service Commission wrote formally to me to say that there was no need for that obligation to continue. I have not yet decided whether or not we will continue on. I think that many of these matters are complex and go to the heart of whether or not the community, our partners and our own staff have confidence in the disciplinary process. I am absolutely not opposed at all to continuing to have that oversight.

Ms CAMM: To clarify for the public record, that was not a specific number? It is just an ongoing consultation, but there is no specific advice that you have sought from Crown Law per case or per matter in the last 12 months? I am just pointing to what was a very clear recommendation of the Coroner for two years to seek advice on disciplinary matters. My question is around specific times that advice was sought. For clarity, you cannot give me a number because it is just ongoing conversations?

Ms Mulkerin: In fact, I think that my response indicates that we actually went above and beyond what the recommendation was, that we have really embraced both the actual recommendation and also the intent of the recommendation.

Ms CAMM: I now have a question for the minister. Minister, this question needs only a very simple yes-or-no answer: do you have targets for reunifications that the department seeks to attempt annually?

Ms LINARD: No.

Ms CAMM: Are there any reunification targets for First Nations children annually?

Ms LINARD: No. Decisions about reunification are made on the basis of what under the act is in the best interests of a child in the situation at hand by officers in the department.

Ms CAMM: Director-General, what safeguards do you have in place for children being reunified in the first 12 months that a child is reunified either with family or kin that can reassure this committee and also Queenslanders that these children are safe and that the placement in terms of reunification is being monitored and supported?

Ms Mulkerin: Thank you for the question. The work that we do around reunification is some of the most complex and difficult that we do. In recognition of that, no reunification decision is made by a single officer. Most of the reunification work that we do is the result of years of work leading up to a decision about whether or not it is safe for a child to return to the family. In fact, the numbers of children that we reunite back with their family are actually very small. In this last year, we have 11,200-odd children in out-of-home care. Of that, 441 were reunited last year. Just over 170 of those were First Nations children. It is a very small number of the children in our care who are reunited—just under four per cent of the total population.

In relation to the process and then the oversight, the decision leading up to whether or not a child will be safely reunited, as I said, is often the result of years of work with families and assessment work. Often children will be at home with their parents—if they are being reunited with their parents—for several nights a week before the decision is made that parents are ready and the children are ready. Those decisions go to panels of experts. We often involve external agencies. Sometimes we seek external specialist advice. It is never the decision of one person; there are multiple eyes, brains and hearts on these decisions.

Depending on the type of order that the young person is on, or how long they might have been away from their parents or their own complex needs, there will be a plan about how long we stay involved. Often that also is then a gradual moving away and, often, other community support agencies are stepping in closer. It never would happen that a child is returned home with no support for the family afterwards or no eyes on that child. It is a gradual build-up and it is often a gradual stepping away on our part.

Mr BERKMAN: Director-General, I understand that the department funds a number of discrete diversionary programs for young people who come into contact with the criminal legal system. Try as I might, I am sure I have failed to put together a comprehensive list of those programs. Accepting that this might not be something you are able to provide on the spot, is the department able to provide a full list of these programs and their respective funding allocations over, say, the last three or four years?

Ms LINARD: We can provide you with a list of programs member if you are struggling to pull it together.

Mr BERKMAN: That would be great. If it is able to be taken on notice, I accept that; wonderful.

Ms LINARD: Yes, sure.

Mr BERKMAN: Very much appreciated.

CHAIR: Can I just clarify? Is the minister taking that question on notice?

Ms LINARD: Yes, sorry. I do know that the member was talking to the director-general, which I why I was looking at him going, 'I can.' Yes, is it more the list, member, that you are particularly interested in, or the numbers?

Mr BERKMAN: And the funding allocated to those programs. Director-General, this relates to a question on notice that I asked back in May around the Atkinson review of the recent youth justice reforms. When I asked that question, the answer indicated that the review was already complete. When was the Atkinson review completed and when might we expect that review to be released?

CHAIR: Minister? You were directing the question to the—

Ms LINARD: It is a question for me, but you have directed to the director-general.

CHAIR: Would you like to redirect the question, member?

Mr BERKMAN: Sure, I am happy to put it to the minister.

Ms LINARD: Thank you, member. Understandably, it is more a question for me because the government is considering the report. That is the only reason I stepped in with the director-general. As you are aware, Bob Atkinson, who is the architect of the youth justice strategy, remains deeply involved in the strategy and the ongoing oversight of it, was also engaged to provide a six-month initial implementation review—not an outcomes review—but about the implementation of the measures that we announced in February, that went through the House and commenced in April. That review was delayed. There was a bereavement—I will not go further into that—in Mr Atkinson's life and it was delayed, but it has been given to government earlier this year. It has been sitting with government. We are considering it and my hope is that it will be released very soon.

CHAIR: I now turn to the—

Mr BERKMAN: Is there no time for a follow-up, Chair?

CHAIR: Member, I will come back to you. Member for Cook?

Ms LUI: Will the minister outline the new investment in the child safety system in this year's budget?

Ms LINARD: The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering better services to keep Queensland children safe from abuse and negligent. In this year's budget the government is investing \$2 billion in child and family services. This will include nearly \$500 million in additional funding for out-of-home care services ongoing in response to significant pressures arising from an increase in demand for child protection responses. We know that the past two years of COVID have further exacerbated vulnerabilities in already struggling families and we will always respond to that need. Additional funding in this budget of \$2.2 billion over five years—and, as I mentioned, \$500 million ongoing—for out-of-home care is to ensure that vulnerable children and young people have a safe place to lay their head.

Some \$126 million will be invested through the final phase of the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program, including \$5.6 million to continue the delivery of the child protection litigation model and \$5.2 million for the Our Way strategy. Some \$6.1 million has been allocated for the administration of the National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse in Queensland.

Most importantly, though, this budget delivers transformational reform for young people transitioning from out-of-home care. From 1 July 2023 our government will extend support to care leavers until they turn 21. This is a reform that young people called for and have raised consistently with me since my appointment to the portfolio in late 2020. It is truly a privilege to deliver this reform for young Queenslanders and to be a member of a government that places such importance on their voices. There were many stakeholders that also called for this change, but I especially acknowledge the Create Foundation. Some \$200,000 has been allocated in this year's budget for a co-design process to make sure that the views of young people and other key stakeholders are taken into account so that we get this reform right the first time.

We are continuing our investment in more frontline staff in this budget to support the challenging and deeply important work our frontline child safety staff do. For the committee's attention, I advise that since 2015 our government has funded an additional 782 child and family services staff to 30 June 2023. This substantial investment has allowed the government to move towards average case loads of 16 per CSO, which is down from 21 under the former government. We have made this investment because we know that across my portfolio all departmental staff have one thing in common: they are driven by a desire to make meaningful change to the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families. When we invest as a government in our front line and our people, we deliver better services and better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families across the state.

Mr SKELTON: Will the minister provide an update on the Community Partnership Innovation Grants scheme referred to at page 2 of the SDS?

Ms LINARD: As the Minister for Youth Justice, I am acutely aware of the complexity underlying youth offending and of the importance of working together to address its causes. Individuals, families and communities all have a critical role to play in preventing and reducing youth crime. Local communities are often the first to see a young person disengage. As I have travelled throughout the state over the past two years since being appointed the Minister for Youth Justice, communities have told me they want to be a part of the response and the solution to vulnerable and disengaged youth in their local communities. Many have come forward with innovative ideas or partnerships which are already in place but that they need to partner with government on.

To that end, earlier this year I announced a one-off \$1.4 million Community Partnership Innovation Grants round for grants of up to \$250,000 and invited the community to come forward with their innovative programs targeted at preventing and reducing youth crime. The response was very strong, with 116 applications received. From these, eight were successful and include initiatives such as funding youth workers to run an intensive six-month post-release-from-detention program in Ipswich. This will be for First Nations young people and targeted at training and employability. Elders assisting police to conduct cautions and provide support to young people and families in Inala is a program that respects the important role elders play in delivering culturally competent responses. There is culturally safe wraparound services and support for Pasifika young people and their families in Logan. There is also support for disengaged First Nations young people in Moreton Bay to get them into education, training and employment. These are just a few programs. There are many others, including in regional Queensland.

It was clear from the number and quality of applications that many individuals and organisations want to be part of the solution. Of course, this was no surprise to me as local communities regularly raise their ideas with me as I travel across the state, listening to communities about how best to address, support and redirect young people in their communities to pro-social activities and behaviours. Following this strong response and the quality of the applications received, I was pleased to announce an additional \$3 million in my budget to continue and extend this worthwhile partnering with local communities initiative to deliver real outcomes on the ground. I look forward to continuing this conversation with local communities across Queensland and announcing more of these partnerships in the year ahead.

CHAIR: Earlier in the session you acknowledged the valuable work foster and kinship carers do within the department. Will you advise of efforts to improve supports for those people?

Ms LINARD: Foster and kinship carers are the backbone of the child safety system and we value them enormously. I know I say this every chance I get and I know my director-general says the same. I take this opportunity to thank the close to 6,000 Queensland families who open their hearts and homes to nearly 10,000 children and young people. Since becoming minister I have met with and spoken to carers across Queensland including in Cairns, Townsville, Longreach, Mackay, Bundaberg, the Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, of course my electorate of Nudgee and many other locations. I always value these conversations and the honesty of carers and I always take every opportunity to thank them for their service to vulnerable children and young people. I have and will always listen to their concerns and act when needed to provide additional support.

Earlier this year, when carers in North and Far North Queensland came forward with concerns, we provided direct contact points for departmental officers, including managers, to quickly resolve issues. We established a dedicated carer support line for carers to escalate issues of concern. We commenced an ongoing series of child safety service centre open days for carers and children. We established Connected in Caring, a North Queensland consultative team made up of carers, carer support agencies, Queensland Foster and Kinship Care and departmental officers.

The group has now met three times—most recently last week—and has identified four priority areas: exploring how best to engage with carers and provide support, whether that is through events, written communication, support groups, on-call responses or something different; making sure that carers have clear expectations around the roles taken by support agencies and the department; making sure carers have clarity in relation to financial support, policies, procedures and local department processes; and ensuring there is consistency of approvals and information provided across service centres.

The North Queensland region has already established a monthly carer newsletter to allow for communication directly with carers. The newsletter details upcoming events, supports available, training opportunities and any changes in policy or practices. Five editions have been published so far and carer contributions have been encouraged. Feedback has been positive from carers thus far and we will continue to listen to their views.

Our government also continues to invest in organisations that advocate for and support foster and kinship carers like Queensland Foster and Kinship Care. QFKC is the peak organisation that supports and represents the needs of potential carers and approved carers. They provide training and support to foster and kinship carers to empower them to care for vulnerable children and young people and work to safeguard and promote the rights of foster and kinship carers. They advocate strongly for the carers they represent and in North Queensland they are part of the Connected in Caring consultative team.

QFKC in 2021-22 received almost \$1.4 million from our government, with an additional \$100,000 from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General provided to Hub Community Legal Centre to support QFKC with legal advice, information and representation. Their CEO, Bryan Smith, is a champion for foster and kinship carers. I would like to thank him for his fierce, fearless and honest advocacy on their behalf. He is also, along with his lovely wife, Linda, a foster-carer himself and they are truly beautiful people.

Overall, in 2022-23 the government will provide \$145.9 million to foster and kinship care and intensive foster care services for foster carer recruitment, training and support. The partnership between child safety staff, the non-government services we fund to work directly with and support carers, and our foster and kinship carers are vital to the work that we do to support vulnerable children and young people. What unites us is that key aim: to keep children safe. I and I know my director-general and the department will keep working to achieve that aim and improve processes where needed to acknowledge and support the invaluable work of our amazing carers.

Ms LUI: Minister, in acknowledgement of the valuable work foster and kinship carers do, will you advise of efforts to improve supports for them?

Ms LINARD: Member, I have just addressed many of those supports that we are doing. I can go through that again, Chair, if you would like—those numbers and the agencies that we fund.

Ms LUI: Sorry, Minister. Will the minister advise why extending support to 21 is so important and what benefits young people exiting out-of-home care will receive from this reform?

Ms LINARD: Thank you, member. Please do not apologise. I am happy to talk about supports and working with carers as many times as you would like or anyone would like.

As I spoke about in my opening statement, I was very proud to announce this historic reform. In the year to 31 March this year, 258 young people turned 18 and exited out of care. While young people exit the child protection system once they turn 18, some remain living with their carer, and the department can continue to pay a carer allowance to age 19. From 2023-24 this will be extended to age 21. As at 31 March 2022, there were 185 young people 18 years and over remaining with their carer, 113 with their kinship carer, 64 with their foster carer and eight in residential care.

Importantly, we know that when young people transition from being in care they face many hurdles. This time of transition in any young person's life to adulthood and independence is a significant time of change, even more so for many young people exiting care who may not have family or adult supports in their life post care.

We want to see young people succeed, find their feet and thrive in further education or work when they leave care. That is why, as I mentioned, I was so proud to stand next to young people with a care experience recently when we announced together that Queensland will extend support for young people transitioning from out-of-home care to 21. This will mean for young people living with foster or kinship carers that they can choose to remain with their carers and the foster care allowance will be extended until they turn 21 years of age.

Young people who are living independently or in residential care will access the same financial support as the carer allowance. All young people will have access to culturally supportive personal support provided by a non-government worker. Extended post-care support for young people has been shown to promote positive life outcomes including greater opportunities for education and training, employment, and economic and social participation.

Create Young Consultants and young people in out-of-home care advocated for these changes. We are committed to working with them to roll them out. Create Foundation has been contracted to lead the design of the support. They will engage young people who are currently in care or who have recently been in care. Listening directly to young people about what support they need and how they wish to access it is critically important to get this life-changing reform right.

In the meantime young people turning 18 before 1 July 2023 will still have access to a suite of programs to assist them in their transition to independence—programs like Next Step Plus, the transition and post-care support service, the Youth Housing and Reintegration Service and the Create Foundation's 'Go Your Own Way' kits. These kits include information about transitioning from out-of-home care and will still be available to care leavers. Our government will always work to deliver better services to improve the life outcomes of young people in out-of-home care, and extending support is a significant step towards delivering this aim.

If I can say to those young Create consultants who may or may not be listening today—and I have said this many times to them—their advocacy was so powerful because they told their own personal experiences and stories. As a mother sitting with these young people, as I regularly do, and

hearing their experiences, one of the consultants said to me—and I think I said this in the House when I talked about this announcement—‘Minister, you have your own children and they will have you post 18. I don’t have that. I don’t have anyone. Why do I have to do it alone?’ I think that was one of the most powerful conversations I have had with a young person in the child safety system since being appointed minister. Indeed, they are right—no child or young person should be alone in that transition. I am very proud personally and as the minister and of our government to take this step.

Mr SKELTON: Will the minister advise the programs delivered in youth detention centres to address offending behaviour and break the cycle of youth crime?

Ms LINARD: Thank you, member for Nicklin. I thank you for this question because I think very few people understand the programs that do get delivered in youth detention centres. That is understandable. Very few people have been to one of these centres. I know that our colleague the member for Maiwar will be very interested in this as well.

Detention centres of course play an important role in holding young people to account for their offending. However, these young people also need the chance to turn their lives around and break the cycle because that is actually how we reduce offending. Punitive measures of course are not supported by evidence as being the way to break that cycle. It is these interventions that are truly powerful. Specialised support services and interventions, access to education, training, work, referrals to health and other support services are all integral to achieving rehabilitative outcomes, reduced offending and enhanced community safety.

In respect of youth detention centres, on admission to a YDC young people are assessed by multidisciplinary teams that include primary health and mental health practitioners, speech and language pathologists, psychologists, caseworkers and education staff. These assessments are conducted regardless of the young person’s legal status and are undertaken with a view to tailoring appropriate services and interventions for that young person.

Programs provided for young people in youth detention are tailored to meet individual risk factors and underlying needs, are to be culturally appropriate and cover educational, vocational training and skills offered through the on-site education team run by the Department of Education who provides an education program 48 weeks a year, five days a week; behavioural change programs focused on key issues including domestic and family violence, emotional regulation and aggression replacement programs; speech and language programs; life skills; programs targeting social and domestic skill development; targeted health programs offered through the health team including mental health education, group therapy programs and substance use intervention; fitness programs promoting health, teamwork and motor skill development; and targeted cultural programs including connection with cultural elders.

In February 2022, the Department of Education, as I mentioned, expanded the delivery of education services in our youth detention centres from 40 weeks per year to 48. This will significantly improve the capacity of our YDCs to re-engage young people with the education system, further supporting their successful rehabilitation.

The department commences casework for each young person as they enter youth detention with a view to actively plan for the young person’s supported release from a detention centre. On 1 March 2022 we rolled out 72-hour release plans across the state to ensure better information sharing and structured engagement of young people exiting detention. To develop these plans, Youth Justice will consult with the young person, their parents and carers, relevant stakeholders and Youth Justice personnel to commence the 72-hour release plan process.

Youth Justice will find, identify and make an assessment of the young person’s needs and risks, strategies to address these factors and appropriate support people. Youth Justice will then develop a detailed schedule that provides a clear plan of how the young person will spend the first 72 hours, which are so key after exiting detention. Young people and their parents and carers are also provided with a detailed schedule. This document is provided to relevant stakeholders including the QPS.

Our government is committed to understanding each person’s risk factors and coordinating the delivery of essential services and interventions while they are in youth detention to break the cycle of offending because we know that our community wants to see all Queensland young people being law abiding but equally experiencing the same opportunities and hope for a future that any of our children would have.

CHAIR: We will now go to non-government questions.

Ms CAMM: My question is to the minister. I thank the minister for the acknowledgement of foster carers across our state and the incredible work that they do. When a foster carer contacts and reports to the department bruises or injuries on a child following contact visits, what action is taken by the department, noting that maybe the minister has to refer to the director-general?

Ms LINARD: That is an operational question, so it is most appropriately directed to the director-general.

Ms Mulkerin: If a carer—anybody, in fact—raises concerns with us about the safety of a child then we will raise a report and we will investigate. I assume you are referencing children who might be in and out, visiting their families and coming back to carers. Some of those bruises or marks are just in the course of children in the playground playing with each other, like every child. Regardless of the kind of outcome the process is the same: we investigate the concerns raised, we speak to the child and we speak to the carer. If they were in the care of somebody else, we would investigate them. If there was any kind of medical matter we would of course arrange for a medical. Matters are investigated and assessed according to their severity.

Ms CAMM: If a child discloses sexual abuse to a foster carer and a foster carer is concerned at physical signs of abuse, what is the process for reporting that to police or Child Safety? The instance I am referring to is an example of where a foster carer reported to police and then felt they were punished by the department because they did not contact the department in the first instance. In the scenario that a child is returned, whether that be from a visitation or externally, and discloses a claim of sexual abuse and the foster carer has raised a physical concern, what is the process that the foster carer is expected to uphold?

CHAIR: Member for Whitsunday, if I could interrupt for one moment. I am conscious that we are possibly straying away from budget estimates considerations. Having said that—

Ms CAMM: Chair, I would refer to the effectiveness measures—

CHAIR: Order, member! Please do not interrupt me. Member, I was about to continue. I will allow the question. It is being directed to the director-general but it is just a general caution, warning—warning is too strong. It is a general observation that today we are here to talk about the budget estimates process and allocation. I will allow the director-general to respond to the question. It was simply an observation.

Ms Mulkerin: It does not matter how the matter gets to police. All allegations of sexual abuse are a report of a crime. Whether the carer makes the report, whether my colleagues on the front line do or whether it is somebody from Education, Health or anybody else, the mechanism to get there is to make sure it is appropriately investigated. I am concerned about a comment you made that the carer felt we were less than supportive of her. I am concerned about that. If you have more information, of course I would be happy to follow that up outside of the chamber and of course—

Ms CAMM: Chair, I have written to the minister on several occasions with regard to this.

Ms Mulkerin: In relation to allegations of sexual abuse, we will look at them; police will look at them. If there is medical information, if there is a medical examination, either we or the carer or somebody else will organise for a child to be medically examined. There is often a discussion between the key agencies. It is never a matter that we do not investigate. As I said, I am so sorry that the carer feels that how she went about that would cause some difficulty. It is neither here nor there how it gets to police.

CHAIR: At this point the committee very warmly welcomes the member for Kawana.

Ms CAMM: I have a follow-on question from that, Chair, and I would reassure you that it is in line with the budget. My question to the director-general is around expense when it comes to medical care for children. Director-General, are second, third or fourth opinions sought from doctors by the department in cases of alleged abuse or alleged injury or alleged potential medical conditions et cetera—I am going to the line item which would be a budgetary expense of the department—otherwise known as doctor shopping, to get an outcome?

Ms Mulkerin: It does happen that we engage experts from outside of our field. In most service centres we have a relationship with a GP or a specialist or we will engage with the specialists that Health provide to us for specialist care. I cannot make any comment about your comment about doctor shopping. What I can say is that it is not uncommon for us to seek expert advice, particularly for areas outside of our expertise.

Ms CAMM: I was provided with an example in Far North Queensland where a child presented with certain alleged assault injuries. To ensure it met certain thresholds, the department took an assessment from multiple doctors, both emergency and GPs, to determine whether the child met a

threshold of injury before it was returned to visitation with its family. My question is very specific: are you aware that a practice may occur across parts of your department where multiple GPs are being engaged to assess injuries to children that go towards a threshold of whether they are returned to family or kin for visitation?

Ms Mulkerin: As you are aware, I am not able to talk about any specific cases. I know the specific case that you are referencing, so I am—

Ms CAMM: Director-General, I am speaking about multiple cases—not one specific case, multiple cases. More generally, Chair.

CHAIR: Member, you asked the question. The director-general is being responsive. I ask that we, as members, demonstrate our respect for the Public Service and allow the director-general to respond accordingly.

Ms Mulkerin: As I was saying, as you know, there are very strong confidentiality provisions about speaking about any particular case. I can say that I am aware of a number of cases where this issue has been raised, and some of those relate to carers in North Queensland. You would be aware that at the time the issues were raised by those carers I personally went to Townsville. I spent some time with carer representatives, our support agencies and my own frontline staff. Of the particular cases that were of concern at the time, I also personally reviewed the files. I reviewed some of the information.

I think in the past the minister has referenced that this has been my lifelong career. I have been at this for 38 years—nudging up closer to 40 than anything else—so when I read files I do know what I am looking at and what I am looking for. I think in some circumstances it would be fair to say that we have sought other opinions, and in some cases our carers have voiced concerns about the motivation for that. I do not know that I have anything to really say about carers thinking there is some motive behind that. I only want to honour and respect our carers.

I know from having spent decades working with carers that when they raise issues of concern they are genuinely concerned. They have fears and worries for the children they are caring for. I make absolutely no commentary about their motivation about raising concern—none whatsoever.

I think though that often the processes are not always transparent and clear to carers, and that is really our responsibility to make that clearer. I think in the less than transparent way which we might talk about some of the process that we do, there is an attribution made to it that there is some view that there is some Machiavellian intent or that we are trying to obfuscate something. Often it is simply that we are seeking more information or we are seeking the expertise of another professional.

Again, I make absolutely no comment whatsoever about the motivation of carers raising concerns. I know that they love and care for the children in their care.

Mr BLEIJIE: Director-General, I have a few questions with respect to the Caloundra youth remand centre—aka Caloundra youth gaol. Can you advise this committee what is the total cost of the Caloundra youth remand centre?

Ms Mulkerin: Thank you for the question. I presume you are referencing the Caloundra short-term remand centre proposal that did not proceed.

Mr BLEIJIE: Correct.

Ms Mulkerin: As you would be aware, in last year's budget the government allocated \$5 million in funding for infrastructure for the short-term remand centre and up to \$11.4 million over four years for its operation. The operational funding was not released to the department; it was held centrally. Post the budget announcement, the department committed a portion of the \$5 million on initial works on the watch house, including design and preparation for upgrades to fire, security and information systems. In the course of doing that and up until when the work was ceased or paused, the total expenditure to date has been \$954,701, so there is a remaining \$4 million unspent.

Mr BLEIJIE: Director-General, does that nearly million dollars include things like the air-conditioning units that were sitting outside the youth remand centre but never used and the security fencing that was apparently ordered but never got used? Does that include all of those costs, or have they gone to other areas of the department but not included in that cost?

Ms Mulkerin: That is the total cost to the department of preparation works, site works, ordering, entering into contracts, penalties for stepping back away from contracts. It is our total cost.

Mr BLEIJIE: Director-General, there was a purchase order for QBuild for some \$2 million. Did that purchase order have to proceed to invoice stage, or are you saying that the \$2 million was not spent with QBuild?

Ms Mulkerin: Correct—\$954,701.

Mr BLEIJIE: Director-General, the member for Caloundra, Jason Hunt, emailed the minister's office on 22 July 2021 advising, 'I have a strong feeling that some of the angst can be relieved through simple architectural tweaks, more on that later if I can see the floorplans.' Did the department provide Mr Hunt the floor plans so he could tweak them to hide the fact that this was in fact a youth jail?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana—

Mr BLEIJIE: I will rephrase.

CHAIR: That would be great. Member for Kawana, can I confirm if you are directing the question to the director-general?

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, the director-general.

CHAIR: And would you mind rephrasing?

Mr BLEIJIE: Director-General, did the department provide those floor plans to Mr Hunt so he could architecturally tweak them?

Ms Mulkerin: I am not aware that we did and I will absolutely check of course. It would not have been a matter that we would have consulted with a member of parliament—not even my minister—in relation to the operational requirements of the remand centre.

Mr BLEIJIE: Director-General, Ms Wall, a media manager in your department, emailed you on 18 January 2022 advising, 'Apparently, there is a reluctance from high above to use figures that are then set in stone and could backfire later. There is some regret apparently about the figure used yesterday.' Director-General, who is 'high above', what was their concern about the backfire and who regretted giving the media the figures?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, I appreciate your question. Are you directing the question to the director-general?

Mr BLEIJIE: I said it was to the director-general, yes.

CHAIR: Director-General, I will allow you to answer the question as you see fit. There are a range of imputations and inferences in that question. If you choose not to answer that question, I will respect your decision.

Ms Mulkerin: Thank you, Chair. I am not aware of who that officer was referring to. It certainly was not her higher up, as in me, the director-general.

Mr BLEIJIE: It could be the minister's office?

Ms Mulkerin: I cannot comment. I do not know.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, I also caution you about mentioning identities of public servants in your questioning.

Mr BLEIJIE: Madam Chair, it is a publicly released right to information request that I have here. I do not feel like tabling it because I did not bring 20,000 copies.

CHAIR: Please do not table that. I know the member for Maiwar has a question.

Mr BERKMAN: I have a few questions in relation to lockdowns in youth detention centres which I expect are best directed to the Director-General. I see Mr Drane here, but I will direct them to the director-general in the first instance. Director-General, can you tell the committee on how many days in the last financial year were young people locked down in their units for more than 22 hours of the day?

Ms Mulkerin: Thank you for the question. In this last year, there were 35 incidents of centre-wide lockdown across the state—six in Brisbane Youth Detention Centre, nine in Cleveland and 20 in West Moreton.

Mr BERKMAN: To the second element of that question, are you able to indicate how long those lockdowns ran for or in how many of those instances it was for a period longer than 22 hours?

Ms Mulkerin: I will have to take some advice because I am not sure we will be able to have that information. Lockdowns occur for very specific reasons. It might be a disturbance in one particular unit and then it takes an hour to settle and then another hour to sort out the whole centre. Some of them can run for quite a number of hours so it is really dependent on the incident and the reason for causing the lockdown.

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you. I appreciate if you can take some—

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Maiwar.

Mr BERKMAN: Chair, I have a follow-up question.

CHAIR: I will come back to you.

Mr BERKMAN: It is very much on the same topic, if you could indulge me for a moment longer.

CHAIR: Minister, could you please advise how youth justice supports and involves victims of crime in justice processes?

Ms LINARD: I thank you for that question. As members may be aware, the Queensland Police Service plays the primary role in supporting and involving victims of crime in justice processes, including through the provision of information and support related to investigations and prosecutions, and making referrals to relevant support services, such as Victims Assist. This is of course the case as, when an offence occurs, police present on the scene and have contact with victims of crime when taking statements, for example.

Once a young person has gone before the court and receives an order, whether community or detention, it falls within my portfolio responsibilities. As Minister for Youth Justice, I am responsible for setting the policy and legislative agenda to hold young people who offend accountable for their behaviours and to provide programs and interventions to help them turn their lives around. It is about keeping the community safe, and I never lose sight of the impact that offending has on victims and their stories which many have shared with me when carrying out my role.

The impact of offending on victims and the importance of their voices being heard is why in 2015 the Palaszczuk government reinstated restorative justice conferencing as a key program to hold young people to account and give victims of crime a voice in that process. Restorative justice conferencing can have positive benefits for all involved. It is a process that acknowledges the impacts and consequences of crime on victims and the community. The young person, the victim or victims and their support people have the chance to determine an achievable outcome for the child to help repair the harm caused by their offending in a way that is meaningful to the victim. It provides an opportunity for everybody involved to be heard and understood and also allows those most affected by an offence to be a part of the process of deciding how the offender should be held accountable for their behaviour. By gaining an understanding of their impact on others, the young person can participate in helping to repair the harm caused to the victim and hopefully gain insight that may guide their choices in the future.

For victims, restorative justice conferencing provides an opportunity to tell their story, seek answers to questions they may have about the crime, be involved in the justice process and seek outcomes that are meaningful to them. Victims can be empowered through regaining their confidence, optimism and sense of safety through this process. The victim's recovery from an offence is also assisted by being able to have support people, including family and friends, participate with them.

A key principle, importantly, of restorative justice is no further harm, meaning that if the process is likely to cause further harm to any of the participants, especially the victim, then it is not to progress. Conveners offer support to victims even if they opt not to participate in the restorative justice process such as assisting them with counselling and support referrals. Data shows that 77 per cent of young people who participate in this process either did not reoffend or decreased the magnitude of their reoffending within six months of their conference.

Our government is committed to evidence based initiatives, and restorative justice conferences have proven effective in reducing reoffending. The process requires difficult conversations and active participation from the young person which can differ from more mainstream justice responses. However, Chair, we are committed to continuing to hear the voices of victims in the process.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, I appreciate that the task force announced by the Premier is led by Assistant Commissioner Cheryl Scanlon of the Queensland Police Service. Can you please outline your agency's contribution to the task force?

Ms LINARD: We know that our reforms are working as the number of young people who offend in Queensland continues to decrease, despite population growth. Youth offending has decreased by 37 per cent in the past 10 years for young people aged 10 to 16, noting 17-year-olds came into the youth justice system in 2018. We have seen a 28 per cent decrease in the number of 10- to 17-year-old young people who are offending from the 12 months ending 31 March 2019. Despite the continued reduction in the number of young people who offend, there is a small cohort committing almost half the crime committed by young people. These young people have more challenging behaviours, are committing more offences, and are referred to as the serious repeat offender cohort.

The Youth Justice Taskforce was established in 2021 and is led by the Queensland Police Service, as you mentioned, under the excellent leadership of Assistant Commissioner Cheryl Scanlon and supported by the expertise of Senior Executive Director Michael Drane, who is here today. The

task force is delivering a targeted response across the state for this cohort. These young people must be held accountable but they must also be given the opportunity to turn their lives around, because it is only by breaking the cycle of offending that community safety is truly enhanced and achieved.

To achieve this, our government understands the importance of delivering evidence based initiatives that work with young people and their communities and is providing increased funding of \$5 million over four years and \$1.3 million per annum ongoing to repurpose specialist multiagency response teams into statewide, multiagency, collaborative panels to address serious repeat offenders. Our department is leading the panels, which are made up of relevant government and non-government agencies including Queensland Health, Education Queensland, Housing and DATSIP to coordinate individualised case management for each young person in the cohort.

There is no simple fix for the many complex problems that lead to young people offending, but by understanding each individual's risk factors and coordinating the integrated delivery of essential services, such as housing, education, substance use, mental health and family intervention, there is a greater likelihood that these young people will stop offending.

One of many good news stories out of the task force's involvement is one I would like to share of a 17-year-old in Far North Queensland who was referred to the On Country program. At the time of the referral, they had significant offending history and were subject to youth justice and child protection orders. They engaged extremely well with Youth Justice staff and are now looking to expand their studies through music. They were also referred to necessary health supports to address underlying causes of offending. These tailored responses have resulted in reduction of offending behaviours and their removal from the serious repeat offender index.

Since this initiative was announced last year, significant effort by the task force has been focused on the establishment of these coordinated panels across the state to deliver this required intensive case management. This is nation-leading work that our two departments are doing hand in hand—my department and QPS—with respect to the development of the serious repeat offender index, which has provided the capability to identify and therefore respond in a more targeted way to this cohort. This is where our focus continues in the year ahead to deliver community outcomes.

CHAIR: Minister, with reference to page 1 of the SDS, will you provide advice on the importance of the secondary system, including family wellbeing services, in diverting families from the child protection system?

Ms LINARD: Secondary family support services provide access for families to vital early intervention support so that Queensland children can thrive and grow up safely with their families. In the recent state budget for 2022-23, our government will invest \$128.7 million in family support services including \$43.4 million across 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family wellbeing services. First Nations children and families are disproportionately represented in the child protection system and are progressively more over-represented with each level of child protection intervention. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children make up approximately eight per cent of Queensland children but comprise 25 per cent of all children subject to an intake, 32 per cent of all children subject to a substantiation, and 45 per cent of children in out-of-home care. During the 12 months to 31 March this year, the proportion of First Nations children in care remained relatively stable at 44.5 per cent, a reversal of the pre-reform trend of growing disproportionate representation. While Queensland has one of the lowest rates of disproportionate rates of representation in Australia, these figures remain unacceptable and are an area of key and sustained focus for my portfolio.

Guiding our actions is *Our way: a generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017-2037* and its supporting action plans to set the foundations for change to eliminate this disproportionate representation within a generation. Our Way is led by my department in conjunction with Family Matters Qld and overseen by the Queensland First Children and Families Board, and I thank both Family Matters and all QFCFB members for holding the department and our government to account for meeting these ambitious targets. A vital focus under this plan, and one in which Queensland leads the nation, is the proportion of expenditure provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations for family support at 23 per cent and intensive family support services at 36 per cent.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family wellbeing services are designed to intervene early so Queensland children can grow up safely, surrounded by kin and culture. These services provide the early intervention support needed for families across Queensland. Almost 5,000 families were referred

to family wellbeing services in the year to March 2021, a more than four per cent increase compared to previous years. These services have proven highly effective at diverting families from the child protection system.

More than 20 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families subject to a child concern report are subsequently investigated by the department within six months. For First Nations families, however, who are able to work with family wellbeing services to have their needs met, this almost halves, to 11 per cent. Take-up of these services continues to grow, following a concerted effort and public awareness campaign of Family and Child Connect and family wellbeing services across our state.

Another key action under this strategy is the implementation of delegated authority where the functions or powers of the chief executive under the Child Protection Act are delegated to the CEO of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entity where certain requirements are met. The implementation of delegated authority arrangements in Rockhampton and the Sunshine Coast delivered by Central Queensland Indigenous Development, CQID, and Refocus—which is well known to you, member for Nicklin—has seen 40 instruments of delegation approved. The support of these entities has enabled 11 children to be reunified with family and the remaining children are in the process of being reunified or connected with family, culture and community. Discussions are continuing with key stakeholders and the department is participating in knowledge circles with them as a first step in the co-design of a blueprint for rolling out delegated authority more broadly across Queensland.

Ms LUI: Minister, I know you recently visited Mareeba in my electorate. Can you please talk about the services that are being offered in Far North Queensland to tackle youth crime and more specifically in the Cook electorate?

Ms LINARD: Thank you for the question and thank you for having me in your electorate again recently. I have been listening to the voices of victims in Far North Queensland and the devastating impact crime has on them and their communities. On one of my Far North Queensland visits this year at your invitation, member for Cook, I appreciated the opportunity to meet with key stakeholders who are all working hard each day to prevent crime and provide support to young people and families to turn their lives around. During that visit I appreciated the opportunity to sit down with the Mareeba Mayor, Angela Toppin, the council and Chamber of Commerce members, who talked about the impact of youth crime on their local community.

All Queenslanders deserve to be safe in their homes, in their workplaces and across the community, and young people who break the law need to be held accountable for those actions. We know that addressing youth crime requires a range of responses targeted at the individual and also the family and community level and it requires a collective response across government, non-government, communities and families. While programs and interventions are having an impact, we know we need to do more to address the serious repeat offender cohort and those who continue to commit offences.

On the ground in Mareeba the department has been working closely with the Mareeba Shire Council, the Queensland Police Service and local businesses and stakeholders to develop localised actions and solutions to address the underlying causes of offending by the young people in the community. The council is doing a wonderful job of leading with action in this space in that they have recently endorsed the Mareeba Community Taskforce Action Plan. The top five priorities in that plan identified by members of the Mareeba task force were: improved health services, improved transport connectivity, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, affordable housing and improved community safety.

Programs being delivered in Mareeba to address the underlying causes of offending include: Transition 2 Success, coordinated care for young people, young offender support service delivered by Mission Australia and family wellbeing services in Mareeba, and I have just spoken about how powerful those services are.

In January 2022 the PCYC established the Pulse cafe—which you know well, member, and which we visited—a drop-in program run by PCYC staff and volunteers that provides a space for young people to meet mentors and engage in pro-social, after-hours and recreational activities. I met the team delivering those services and programs while there and of course the passion they showed for intervening with young people was clearly evident.

After listening to the community, our government announced investment in delivering place based youth justice services in Mareeba through a new child safety and youth justice co-located service centre. During this trip I also travelled to Edmonton, one of the fastest growing areas in Cairns, to announce a new youth justice service and additional staff to operate out of the Edmonton PCYC. This announcement, like yours, member for Cook, came about after the strong advocacy of yourself, the

member for Cairns, the member for Mulgrave and the member for Barron River. I will continue to meet with local communities like yours to hear firsthand about the place based initiatives best able to address youth offending behaviours.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair?

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, the member for Caloundra, in his support for the Caloundra youth jail, sent out a flyer across Caloundra titled 'The facts—forget the spin'. Despite his strong support, the government has now canned the project. We have just had it confirmed that the government spent \$1 million on a project that has never proceeded. How does the minister justify this massive waste of money considering there are people on the Sunshine Coast who cannot get a roof over their head and are struggling with the rising cost of living?

Ms LINARD: Thank you very much, member for Kawana. It is always a pleasure. I thank you for the question about Caloundra. We had two clear options at the end of the public engagement: we could have continued with the proposal—and, of course, there would not have been an amount expended that did not then result in a short-term youth remand centre—or we could listen to the community, as we did, and no longer proceed. If you are arguing that we should be proceeding and continuing to proceed and not listen to the community—

Mr BLEIJIE: Never!

Ms LINARD: It certainly sounded to me like that was the proposition. I do take this opportunity—

Mr BLEIJIE: No, never supported it.

Ms LINARD:—to acknowledge the advocacy, and strong advocacy, of the member for Caloundra. I thank you for raising that, member for Kawana, because what I would like to say about the member for Caloundra is that from the very beginning of the proposal that was announced in the budget the member for Caloundra communicated with his community honestly, forthrightly and directly. Equally, he communicated with government and me as the responsible minister honestly and faithfully and he faithfully represented the views of his community. That is a very different proposition to what other members in the general region did by peddling misinformation in the community and creating a level of fear that was unnecessary and I think unethical.

We listened to the community. We always said we would. I was very clear with the community about the proposal that if there was a concern about using the Caloundra watch house, which to be fair is a place of detention—and a short-term youth remand centre would have been a continuing place of detention but rather than adults, who might have been there for any number of serious offences, it would have been a short-term holding of young people—we said to the community we would listen to their views. The member for Caloundra was quite clear that he felt that those fears and concerns in the community could not be overcome, and our government listened and will not be proceeding with that proposal.

CHAIR: Deputy Chair?

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the shadow minister.

Ms CAMM: My question is to the minister. Minister, I note that you have travelled to North Queensland and I also acknowledge the advocacy of the opposition in Cairns, Townsville, Goondiwindi and other places where we have seen extreme numbers and increases in youth crime. Is there a statistical correlation and therefore a recognition by this government that when you reflect on the time since 2015 that the number of youth represented in the youth justice system who have come from the child safety system—how many of those youth have been a product of what has been a failed system?

CHAIR: Member for Whitsunday, I am going to ask you to rephrase that question minus the imputations.

Ms CAMM: Minister, of repeat offenders in the youth justice system how many have come from the child safety system?

Ms LINARD: Member, I thank you for your question because it gives me an opportunity to touch on a point that I think is often felt or believed in the community that—

Ms CAMM: Sorry, Madam Chair, it was quite a specific number I was asking for. I do not actually require the minister to give a preamble. If there is a number known I would appreciate that. If there is no number known, I would also appreciate that.

CHAIR: Member, I assume you are rising on a point of order.

Ms CAMM: I am.

CHAIR: I accept the point of order. Member, I was listening, as you would have identified, quite intently to the minister. I will hand to the minister now to respond to the question. Minister, we will be sure that you will not be interrupted.

Ms LINARD: Thank you very much, Chair. I was only about four seconds into the answer, member. Where I was going with it is there is a perception that a large percentage of young people and children on child safety orders are also dual order young people in the youth justice system. The figure is four per cent. I think it is an awful thing to say that when you think about young people and children in the child safety system, a large percentage of them are offenders. I think that is offensive to those young people who are in the system.

Ms CAMM: Sorry, Minister. To clarify, you are saying—

CHAIR: Member, when you interrupt, you are rising on a point of order? What we will do—

Ms CAMM: Chair, a point of order.

CHAIR: You are seeking clarification?

Ms CAMM: I am seeking clarification. On a point of order I am seeking clarification on the number that was just quoted by the minister.

CHAIR: Thank you. Member, we will allow the minister to finish. If she has not provided you the information you were asking for, then you are very welcome to ask a follow-up question. Minister, are you happy to proceed?

Ms LINARD: Yes, I am happy to proceed. I was providing the number. I am happy to come back to the member. I thought that was the number she was seeking—dual-order young people on child safety orders in the system.

Ms CAMM: Chair, I am not seeking a number in regard to dual-order. I was seeking to know the percentage of those in the youth justice system over the last five years who were known to the child safety system. If it is only four per cent, I will take that answer.

Ms LINARD: The figure of four per cent is a reflection of what percentage of children under child protection orders are also dual-order young people under a youth justice order. If you are asking—which I believe you are—for the percentage of young people under a youth justice order who have involvement in the child safety system, it is a very small cohort and a smaller number, obviously, than the number of children in the child safety system, and it is 19 per cent. It is not surprising to hear that young people in the youth justice system, who normally have very complex behaviours and trauma, can also be found in the child safety system.

Ms CAMM: Director-General, how many youths have now been fitted with GPS monitoring devices?

Ms Mulkerin: Six young people.

Mr BERKMAN: I will come back to the questions I was asking previously around lockdown. I have been made familiar with the term 'night mode', where children are locked down for extended periods without access to rehabilitative programs or education. Director-General, can you advise how many times night mode was used at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in the last financial year?

Ms Mulkerin: Those numbers I gave you before were the centre-wide lockdown numbers, and that is the same thing that is colloquially known as night mode.

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you. I suspected that might be the case.

Ms Mulkerin: In relation to your specific question in relation to Cleveland, there were nine centre-wide lockdowns in 2021-22.

Mr BERKMAN: Director-General, can you advise the committee what is the longest time that a child has been held in a behaviour management room in the last 12 months?

Ms Mulkerin: I do not have it with me. I will see if we are able to get it before the session ends.

Mr BERKMAN: Minister, if we cannot get that information in the time available could it be taken on notice?

CHAIR: The director-general has indicated that she would try to get the information before the end of the session. Minister?

Ms LINARD: Yes, we are going to seek to do that, Chair. We will take some advice in the short break and we will come back to you.

Mr BERKMAN: I return to the questions I was asking initially around the Atkinson review. I do not know if these are questions that can be answered, given where the review is up to. Director-General, does that review indicate that First Nations children, disabled children and vulnerable kids in care have been disproportionately impacted by the new laws, as was predicted ahead of the legislation?

Ms Mulkerin: As the minister answered previously, the review is before government.

Mr BERKMAN: It is not yet released, okay. I will change tack then, if I might.

Ms LINARD: I am happy to provide that answer, member for Maiwar, when it is released.

Ms CAMM: Director-General, the interim Coaldrake review identified that a director-general was keeping information from their minister to provide plausible deniability. Was that referring to you as director-general?

Ms Mulkerin: Absolutely not.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, would you provide our committee with an update on the co-responder program?

Ms LINARD: Absolutely. I love the co-responder program. While we know that there is no silver bullet and no easy fix to solve youth crime, we also know that our investments are seeing fewer young people caught in the youth justice system and offending in Queensland. Since coming to government in 2015 we have made a record investment in initiatives that address youth offending including early intervention and prevention programs such as the co-responder initiative. Co-responder teams see police and youth justice staff working hand in hand to reduce reoffending and to stop offending in the first place by engaging with young people. These teams work proactively with young people and their families to build relationships with at-risk families. They go to and engage with young people in the places where they congregate and may be at risk of offending to divert them to pro-social activities and spaces.

After starting in five sites in May 2020, the initiative is now operating in eight locations: Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Logan, Moreton, Brisbane North and the Gold Coast. In Townsville, the police minister and I extended the initiative to include a second team and dedicated vehicle. From the stories that co-responders tell me, there is no doubt they are making a very real difference in turning young lives around and in enhancing community safety. Through their focused efforts, co-responder teams have engaged with young people on more than 40,000 occasions across the state.

I was recently informed about a young person who has been engaging with the local co-responder team since their introduction. They recently graduated from the Transition 2 Success program and are looking at securing employment as a barista at a local cafe. Prior to engagement with this initiative they were considered a significant high-risk offender and spent time in youth detention. The young person had come from a disadvantaged background with significant family dysfunction. The co-responder team has been responsible for consistently engaging with the young person, persevering despite many setbacks, and will continue to work closely with T2S staff and the respective case worker to continue the support this young person into employment.

We know that it is often trauma and complex situations that lead young people to the point of offending and antisocial behaviour. By working together, youth justice staff and police are helping to address these underlying problems. Together, they are connecting young people to services that help tackle issues such as homelessness, disengagement from education, domestic violence and substance misuse, connecting to vocational training and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors.

Importantly, co-responders are also checking on young people on bail to help ensure they comply with their bail conditions, supporting 72-hour post-detention release plans, transporting young people to court when needed and to places of safety when at risk. This approach means offenders are being held accountable while also giving young people in the early stages of offending the chance to stay out of trouble and out of the youth justice system.

We will keep investing in initiatives like these where we have people on the ground 24/7, where and when needed, to divert young people from offending into necessary supports and keep our community safe. I thank the QPS for their partnership in regard to this program. We work incredibly closely with them. It has been wonderful to talk to our youth justice workers who are in the car with police, and indeed police, both reflecting on how powerful it has been to be in that environment together and share their operational expertise with one another to deepen their understanding of young people on the ground. It has been a very powerful initiative and I thank our QPS partners as well as our very hardworking co-responders.

CHAIR: Minister, will you advise of the Palaszczuk government's support for children and young people with disabilities in out-of-home care?

Ms LINARD: Our government is committed to delivering better services for children and young people with a disability. An estimated 16 per cent to 20 per cent of children and young people subject to ongoing child protection intervention have a broad range of disability needs that are likely to make them eligible for the NDIS. Foster and kinship carers are supported to care for children with additional needs through the high-support needs allowance and the complex support needs allowance. These allowances provide additional financial support to carers to help them meet the individual needs of the young people they are caring for.

While there is no change to the fortnightly carer allowance or high-support needs carer allowance as a result of the NDIS, the complex support needs allowance is assessed in the context of an NDIS plan. This is important, as many disability support costs previously covered by the allowance are included in the child's NDIS plan and therefore are no longer paid by the carer providing additional assistance.

The NDIS is responsible for funding reasonable and necessary supports that a person requires as a result of their disability, including when that person is a child in care. The NDIS takes a flexible, individualised approach that invests in children and young people with a disability early to improve their outcomes later in life. It provides certainty for children and young people who become participants in the scheme that they will have access to support to meet their changing needs and goals over a lifetime.

The department, through extensive case work and specialist roles, ensures all eligible children and young people have robust NDIS plans to effectively meet their disability support needs. A range of activities have been undertaken to support the implementation of the NDIS across Queensland, including information sessions for departmental staff, carers and providers; tools, resources and practice manual content for staff; and content and resources for carers, families, providers, children and young people online and in the kibox, Sortli and Carer Connect apps. Work is progressing with regions around better engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with a disability and their families and their access to the NDIS and NDIS related information and support for peak bodies, including the CREATE Foundation, Queensland Foster and Kinship Care and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak.

As at 30 June this year, 3,317 children and young people subject to ongoing child protection intervention have been referred to the NDIS. Of those children, approximately 2,762 have approved NDIS plans, including 1,127 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. The department has employed 17 clinicians and 12 transition officers to work as part of a specialist services team to support child safety officers to work with children and young people with high and complex needs, including complex disability, mental health and trauma related behaviours. These additional supports continue for young people as they transition from out-of-home care. The transition and postcare support program works closely with both the NDIA and the department to support young people with a disability who have high and complex needs to transition to appropriate postcare housing options.

Chair, when you are ready, we do have a number of responses to things taken on notice, just to alert you to that.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister; you took the words right out of my mouth. I have some notes in front of me here. Minister, do you have a number of responses now?

Ms LINARD: We do to matters taken on notice. I might defer to my director-general—

CHAIR: I have five questions. I might hand over to you, Director-General, to guide the committee through that and then we will go to a break.

Ms Mulkerin: Thank you, Chair. In relation to the member for Whitsunday's question—that is, given the response around the response rate, do you measure and what are the statistics around completion rates, so those inquiries specifically around the 24-hour investigations and the time frame and the completion rate on average—it is child safety practice that an investigation and assessment must be completed within 100 calendar days. The latest corporate data is that statewide 93.8 per cent of 24-hour investigations were completed within this time frame.

The member for Whitsunday asked specifically about the south-east region as to how many investigations are still outstanding over 100 days. For the year ending 31 March 2020, there were 1,660 investigations not yet finalised for the south-east. Of these, 522 had been open for more than 100 days, but I note that nearly 5,000—4,676—were finalised in the south-east region. I again note that our practice is for the investigations to be completed within 100 calendar days.

In relation to the member for Maiwar's questions as to whether we can provide more granular information about how long the lockdowns ran for, we are not able to provide more detailed information.

In relation to the member for Kawana's question about whether the department provided the floor plans to Mr Jason Hunt, member for Caloundra, so that he could architecturally tweak them—I think that was his question—the answer is no; there were no plans in place in July 2021.

Lastly, Mr Berkman asked what discrete diversionary programs the department funds and whether we are able to provide a full list of programs and funding allocated to these programs for the last three to four years. There is a list of programs such as Transition to Success, co-responder, restorative justice and integrated case management. For example—

CHAIR: Director-General, if I can just stop you there. Would you be amenable to provide that list to the member for Maiwar via the minister in a format that is appropriate?

Ms LINARD: Yes. That is actually what I am just checking to see if it is a useful format for you.

CHAIR: Yes; I am just conscious of time. There was one outstanding one—that is, what is the longest time a child has been held in a behaviour management room in the last 12 months? Have we got that response as yet?

Ms Mulkerin: I do not.

Ms LINARD: Apologies; we will consult.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. Director-General, we do have it?

Ms Mulkerin: Yes, I do have it. The question was: what is the longest time a child has been held in a behaviour management room in the last 12 months? To clarify, there are no behaviour management rooms. If a young person is separated due to behaviour issues, it occurs in response to individual risk. Placing a young person in a smaller accommodation unit can be one way to address that risk. Where any separation occurs in a specific separation room, this only occurs consistent with one to two hours and it is only on the centre's executive director's approval. Any separations over 12 hours, for example, are at the senior executive director's approval only.

CHAIR: Thank you, Director-General.


Mr BERKMAN: I raise a point of order, Madam Chair. Just briefly before we finish—and I very much appreciate the answer—are you able to indicate in line with the question what the longest time is that a child has been kept in separation, even putting aside the incorrect terminology I used?

Ms Mulkerin: I might need to take more advice in the break.

Mr BERKMAN: Certainly.

CHAIR: Thank you, Director-General. Ladies and gentlemen, it being 5.16 pm, the committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 5.30 pm with the examination of the estimates for the multicultural affairs portfolio.

Proceedings suspended from 5.17 pm to 5.30 pm.

 **CHAIR:** Good afternoon, everyone. The hearing is resumed. I welcome the member for Surfers Paradise, Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, who is substituting for Mr Stephen Bennett, who is the deputy chair of the committee, for this last session of the committee's hearing. It is always good to work with you, member. Welcome. Welcome back to our minister, Leanne Linard, and officials. Director-General, thank you again for being here. The committee will now examine the estimates for the multicultural affairs portfolio. I call the member for Surfers Paradise for his first question.

Mr LANGBROEK: Welcome, Minister, senior staff members and members of the department. Thank you for having us here again as a guest of the committee. My first question in this session, Director-General, is with reference to the annual report of the department, page 58, Fraud and Corruption Control Committee. How many referrals for corruption or misconduct did the department receive in 2021-22?

Ms Mulkerin: Thank you for the question. I am just finding my way back through the folder. In relation to both corrupt conduct matters and misconduct matters in 2021-22, 220—sorry, a clarifying question: about multicultural affairs as opposed to the whole department?

Mr LANGBROEK: If possible, it would be appreciated if we could have it broken down into the various sections of the department, into what was found to be corrupt and/or misconduct in Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise, I am just conscious that under the orders approved by the House we are talking about multicultural affairs here. I will ask the director-general to respond to your question as she sees fit. The minister may determine what other information she would like to provide, but we are focused on multicultural affairs at this point in time.

Ms LINARD: That is all I was seeking your clarification on. We have the numbers. We are happy to provide fulsome numbers. I was just checking what your ruling is.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Ms LINARD: Fulsome or multicultural affairs? We have them.

Ms Mulkerin: For the whole department there were 220 matters of corrupt conduct of which zero related to multicultural affairs, and in relation to misconduct matters there were 52 in relation to the whole department and 0 in relation to multicultural affairs.

Mr LANGBROEK: Given there is very little in multicultural affairs, I will go on to a different line of questioning. Minister, have you met with Ambassador Yamagami of Japan with regard to his government's concerns with the Japan-Queensland relationship following the budget?

Ms LINARD: No, I have not met with him following the budget and those issues have not been raised with me.

Mr LANGBROEK: Has the minister sought briefings from the trade minister and/or the Chinese consul general on the impact of Queensland's Chinese diaspora with respect to escalating tensions between China and Taiwan?

Ms LINARD: No, and those issues have not been raised with me by the community.

Mr LANGBROEK: I refer to Multicultural Queensland Month and the minister's press release of just the other day, and I ask: what is the budget of the department for the month?

Ms LINARD: Under the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland Events Program we have funded 18 events totalling \$175,000 in funding for the month of August. During the month a variety of events and activities are happening right across Queensland, from the far north to the south-east, and I am looking forward to participating in those programs.

Mr LANGBROEK: Would the minister advise the committee of the quantum of the Multicultural Queensland Month sponsorships by Commonwealth Bank, Telstra, Goa Billboards and La Boite Theatre?

Ms LINARD: We have for La Boite Theatre Company for the multicultural month launch \$32,000; we have for Multicultural Australia Ltd for multicultural month \$10,400. That was outgoing sponsorships. Incoming sponsorship to deliver Multicultural Queensland Month from Commonwealth Bank is \$36,364; and we received incoming in-kind sponsorship to assist with promotion of the month from Goa Billboards of \$50,000 in 2021-22. That is the figure here. They are all of the relevant figures and sponsorship, member.

Mr LANGBROEK: Did you mention Telstra then?

Ms LINARD: It is not in my list here, but I agree: I do recall seeing something from Telstra coming through. Can I take that, not formally, on notice? We will have that for you by the end of the hearing.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question goes back to when you and I were both new in these jobs. I asked you in December 2020 about meeting with the Attorney-General to ensure that race related crimes are adequately prosecuted. Your response at the time was 'absolutely'. I think that is something that I and the committee would appreciate having a briefing about in relation to any further actions that you may have had in terms of discussions with the Attorney.

Ms LINARD: I smile at you only because when you say 'new in these jobs', I am at eight years and I think you have a few extra years on me, but I appreciate that you are talking about these roles in multicultural affairs. Of course, the Attorney and I have had ongoing conversations in that regard and, as you would be aware, member, I made a ministerial statement in the House this year and also stood with many of our cultural leaders in regard to the outcomes of the serious vilification inquiry that the House did. I do want to acknowledge the members of that committee and the chair, who did an outstanding job bringing to light the stories of people across community who have experienced racism or hate crimes.

We are moving in regard to those recommendations. They do not fall within my portfolio, of course, because a change in law is required to make sure that symbols which are often used in regard to hate crimes will be outlawed, obviously taking into account cultural sensitivities when we talk about the swastika and how very important and positive symbol that is in many religions.

The Attorney-General is progressing the legislative change in consultation with community. I think it is a wonderful step forward and message being sent to our culturally diverse community across Queensland that we take these matters seriously and it is not okay to say whatever you want, that it

has repercussions for others and that there need to be limits, I think, placed upon people's rights that they may say are free speech but cause fear in members of the Queensland community. Those conversations are ongoing and will become even more regular as we move towards the introduction of legislative change.

Mr LANGBROEK: Along that line, my next question is with reference to page 17 of the annual report. Minister, can you advise us about progress on the Holocaust museum and the importance of it with the recent anti-Semitic actions that we had on the Gold Coast in May of 2022?

Ms LINARD: Thank you for calling that out because, of course, every time incidents like that happen on the Gold Coast it causes deep grief and fear in the community. I want to say that every time these things happen and the Jewish Board of Deputies reaches out to me, my first question, of course, is, 'Is the community okay?' Across Queensland the Jewish community is incredibly supportive of one another but they should not have to be. These sorts of incidents should not be occurring. It is not the Queensland that I know and love and it is not the Queensland that we want to see.

In regard to the Holocaust museum, as you know, the Queensland government committed \$3.5 million, as did the federal government, and there is \$500,000 from the Brisbane City Council. It is a project that we do not own from the point of view that, absolutely, it is a project being led by the community. They have set up a project management body called, I believe, the Queensland Holocaust Museum and Education Centre Limited. We are currently supporting them and talking to them about the appropriate location, which we will announce when they have found and finalised and are happy with that location.

I want to thank and acknowledge my executive director, Wayne Briscoe, and Multicultural Affairs who have been working intensively alongside the management body through the Jewish community to make sure that this project is something that leaves a very powerful legacy in Queensland. Most other jurisdictions have a holocaust museum and education centre. I think it is very important that we talk about these things and that we make sure that we never forget those lessons. There are so many students coming through now who would not have knowledge of the atrocities that have happened, including any genocide. That is something that we should call out too. This centre will be tasked with educating students about genocides generally to make sure that we have these learnings. Look forward to an announcement. I cannot say anything further at this time.

Mr LANGBROEK: I will ask a final question in this block to allow the member for Maiwar to ask a question. Minister, can you please provide the committee with details of the grant assessment panel members for Celebrating Multicultural Queensland grants?

Ms LINARD: I can get that information for you, as to who was on the panel.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you.

Ms LINARD: My executive director may know so I will hand to Executive Director Wayne Briscoe.

Mr Briscoe: The grant panels are different for every grant process that we run. They are mainly representatives from other government departments. Whether or not it is appropriate to provide those names I think we can take into consideration when the answer is provided.

Mr LANGBROEK: Okay.

Mr BERKMAN: Minister, the fall of Kabul in August last year obviously had devastating consequences for the Afghan community, including those people already based in Queensland. I am curious to know what specific advocacy or services or other resources the department has expended or extended to support Queensland's Afghan community?

Ms LINARD: My director-general is going to give me a brief. I thank you for the question. I want to acknowledge the incredible resilience of the community that we have here, which is supporting others who are coming over as part of the humanitarian efforts in this regard. Working with that community and hearing their stories, it continues to be heartbreaking as they are trying to make sure that extended family are safe and brought over here. We have been working very closely with them.

Of course, after 20 years of conflict in Afghanistan it was very distressing to see that situation unfold. I held a meeting with the Afghanistan leaders and heard their concerns about accessing support for loved ones and certainly the evacuation to Australia for those who are in danger, and I continue to hear stories of their extreme distress.

On September 6 last year, I participated in a ministerial forum on multicultural affairs with federal, state and territory multicultural affairs ministers to receive a briefing from the then immigration minister on the Australian government-led settlement response to evacuees and entrants. This included

discussion about further collaboration between the different levels of government to support evacuees. Meetings between officers from my department, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Health, the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and other key agencies from the federal government are continuing as required, as are meetings with community members. My department has convened meetings with key government agencies and Multicultural Australia, which is contracted by the Department of Home Affairs to look after the needs of evacuees to help address any issues impacting evacuees who are settling in Queensland.

An issue of particular concern and urgency, as I am sure the member would know, is the high level of legal assistance required by evacuees from Afghanistan and local community members. In October the Attorney-General pledged \$400,000 from our government to assist Queensland's Refugee and Immigration Legal Service, RAILS, to support its Afghanistan immigration legal clinic. This will help RAILS continue its vital work and support the community.

In addition, the Attorney-General and I wrote a letter jointly to the then Commonwealth attorney-general and immigration minister requesting that they immediately provide additional funding to states and territories for their legal assistance sectors to respond. I am pleased that they listened and, late last year, the Commonwealth government announced \$27.1 million for an Afghanistan settlement support package, which included funding to support specialist legal service providers, including RAILS.

In addition, the Commonwealth government—of course, appreciating that this largely falls under the Commonwealth government—has increased its commitment to settling refugees from Afghanistan so that, in total, around 31½ thousand people will be allowed to resettle in Australia over the next four years. We will continue to work with the now Albanese government to ensure that we can do all we can to support the evacuation and settlement of those people as members of our local community.

I want to call out and thank Mr Aaron Sadat, President of the Queensland Afghan Community Association. Member, you may know Aaron. He has been working nonstop to bring these sorts of concerns to our attention. Aaron and I have spoken personally. I have also spoken to Andrew Giles, the new federal minister, about this issue and the ongoing need to have one-on-one conversations. He was incredibly receptive. He is going to speak directly to Aaron, to understand the issues happening here in Queensland. I will be continuing to talk to him about the supports that they need here on the ground and my department is staying in close contact with them as well. Wayne, is there anything that I have missed in regard to the latest update?

Mr Briscoe: No, not really, Minister. I think you have covered it apart from the fact that we have a very strong Afghani community in Queensland and they are providing tremendous support to the new arrivals. From what we are hearing, settlement is going pretty well for the new arrivals.

Mr BERKMAN: Minister, you have touched in the previous answer on the very important jurisdictional split between federal and state responsibilities. Now that we have a federal Labor government, will you be formally advocating for all refugees and asylum seekers on bridging visas to be transferred to permanent visas so that those people can enjoy all of the healthcare, education and other social support benefits that come along with that?

Ms LINARD: I am very encouraged, not to be too political, by having a federal Labor government to work closely with on these issues. I believe that we should be having a ministerial council for all ministers across the states to talk about these sorts of important issues because, of course, they are impacting across the country. I appreciate that many settlements occur in Victoria and New South Wales but we have the same sorts of issues. One of the things that always concerns me, which is why our government has funded and continued to fund ASRA, is that we know that they have not been supported.

Many of these people are living in abject poverty and they need to be intensively committed to services and, I think, understand the trauma they have come from. Not seeking to talk around the issue here, I think what I am trying to say to you is that I look forward to a lot of very direct conversations and policies that better reflect not only the welcoming and inclusive state that Queensland is but also as a country that we can be a country that has compassion for those who have come from many of these difficult circumstances. I also appreciate that those policy issues lie within the federal government's purview. I look forward to their decisions in that regard moving forward. I cannot be more specific for that. It is not in my lane, but thank you for asking.

CHAIR: Minister, with reference to page 1 of the SDS, will you advise what support the Palaszczuk government has provided to people arriving in Queensland from Ukraine?

Ms LINARD: Thank you very much, Chair. It follows on, when we think about the awful situation that has happened with our Afghani community here. It has been distressing to watch the situation that has continued to unfold in Ukraine, particularly for those Queenslanders from Ukraine or with Ukrainian heritage. Solomiya Rozhko, a Ukrainian woman who arrived in Brisbane with nothing but a small suitcase, told the *Guardian Australia* in April—

The atrocities are immense ... I think the world is yet to see the extent of what's happened.

It is people like Solomiya, one of over approximately 4,000 Ukrainians who have arrived in Australia under the temporary humanitarian stay offer, that the Palaszczuk government has stepped up to assist in their time of need. Throughout this crisis my department has worked closely with Peter Bongiorno, President of the Ukrainian Community of Queensland, along with key government organisations and Queensland government agencies to help ensure people have access to state based services that may relate to settlement such as health and education. For example, we waived quarantine costs and covered emergency health services for those who do not have health insurance or access to Medicare. Peter and his team have been working tirelessly since the conflict began to ensure people arriving from Ukraine have the support they need.

Our government has also collaborated strongly with the federal government and other jurisdictions to address issues as they arise. I was pleased to hear on 14 July that new immigration minister Andrew Giles had extended the application period for Ukrainians to apply for a temporary humanitarian concern visa. I was encouraged by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's announcement last month of an extra \$100 million in military aid to Ukraine and a pledge to help for as long as it takes. It became obvious that the initial application expiry date of 30 June that was set by the former Morrison government had not been communicated to the Ukrainian-Australian community. I am so pleased that this has now been rectified.

I was also pleased to provide one-off funding of \$100,000 from 1 July 2022 to assist the Ukrainian Community of Queensland to support refugees and displaced persons coming to Queensland from Ukraine as well as impacted local community members. When Peter wrote to me requesting this funding, I did not hesitate to make it happen. Supporting our fellow Queenslanders, new and old, is what we do. Our government is leading the country when it comes to supporting the Ukrainian community. Peter summed this up nicely in a letter he sent me thanking the government for the funding. Peter said—

I know when I talk with my counterparts in other states they are in awe of how quickly the Queensland government has acted in supporting our association since the war began.

This funding will complement the work done by Multicultural Australia, Queensland's Humanitarian Settlement Program service provider, and help cover gaps and support that Multicultural Australia is not funded to provide. In May, Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk also donated \$500,000 to the Ukrainian Crisis Appeal on behalf of the Queensland government to support the vital humanitarian work they are doing in Ukraine.

As I said in parliament earlier this year, the aggression of the Russian military upon the people of Ukraine is unacceptable and the human toll of this conflict is devastating. Our government recognises the sovereignty of Ukraine and its right to peace, freedom and democracy. We stand proudly with them.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 1 of the SDS, could you please outline what funding the department provides for projects that engage and support CALD communities?

Ms LINARD: The Celebrating Multicultural Queensland program funds events and projects that engage people from culturally diverse backgrounds and the wider community to contribute to a united, harmonious and inclusive Queensland and support increased economic and social participation for Queenslanders from culturally diverse backgrounds. The CMQ program has recurrent funding of \$2 million per annum. In 2021-22 the CMQ program allocated funding under two grant rounds: one round for multicultural events to be delivered in the 2022 calendar year; and a second round for multicultural projects to be delivered in the 2022-2024 financial years. Event funding goes to events such as the Rockhampton Multicultural Festival, a community celebration of cultural diversity as well as an opportunity to welcome new members to the community to build a sense of belonging.

These events are focused on creating, as I said, a united, harmonious and inclusive Queensland by providing opportunities to share and celebrate culture and to deepen understanding and forge new relationships. I have had the pleasure of attending many of these events since becoming minister. I know that my colleague the member for Surfers Paradise is also at many of these events with me.

Funding rounds are always highly anticipated and oversubscribed, with the two CMQ funding rounds in 2021-22 receiving 309 funding applications, seeking over \$7.8 million. While we cannot fund all of these worthy applications, 102 applications were approved including 80 events receiving funding of \$581,000 and 22 projects receiving funding of \$999,896. This funding will deliver 92 events and projects across 52 electorates, and 10 events and projects across multiple electorates.

Remaining funding of \$419,000 in the 2021-22 CMQ budget was allocated to other activities aligned to the program objectives, including events previously approved for multiyear funding, an extension to the department's work with Welcoming Cities and support for the recently established Queensland United Australian South Sea Islander Council for activities in their business plan. Specifically, funding of \$100,000 per annum over three years from 2021-22 was provided to Welcoming Australia Ltd to support Queensland regional councils to strengthen welcome and inclusion in their local areas.

Funding under the CMQ projects round is provided to projects that support pathways to economic and social participation in the cultural, economic and social life of Queensland and for projects that can assist with breaking down the barriers facing young people from culturally diverse backgrounds that can result in feelings of disconnection with community. Under the 2021-22 funding round, as I mentioned, \$999,896 was approved to assist in the delivery of 22 projects. Funding of almost \$300,000 was approved under the Economic and Social Participation Projects category to assist in the delivery of 10 projects in 2022-23. Funding of over \$699,000 was approved under the Youth and Community Connection Projects category to assist in the delivery of 12 projects between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2024.

One of these projects is Our Future Begins Now, operated by Beny Bol OAM and the Queensland African Communities Council. The project aims to engage with young people and build a consistent, engaging and positive line of communication between young people, families, community and service providers. Youth mentors deliver one-on-one and group activities including resume building, job search and interview, sport, music, personal goal setting, critical thinking, self-confidence, anger management and leadership as well as linking with local key specialist services. It is projects such as this that will help culturally diverse Queenslanders feel more connected to their local communities. By funding these great projects, we continue to build on the many things Queenslanders are already doing to make their communities thrive.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 1 of the SDS, will you be able to provide an update on the work of the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council?

Ms LINARD: The Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council was established by then multicultural affairs minister Minister Grace under the Multicultural Recognition Act 2016. It was the first of its kind. It recognised the importance we place on multiculturalism in Queensland and protecting that, encouraging that and removing barriers.

This council advises me on opportunities and barriers facing people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and how to promote the charter also referenced in that act. The 11-member council live in locations across the state from Gladstone to Mount Isa, Cairns, the Gold Coast and throughout Greater Brisbane. It meets our government's target of 50 per cent representation from women. Members come from a range of culturally diverse backgrounds, have extensive networks and strong links with migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum across the state.

In 2021-22, the council met formally three times, including visiting one regional location—Brisbane in October, Brisbane in March and Hervey Bay in June. Over the last year, the council has met with young people from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to hear their perspectives directly, led discussions on welcome and belonging in the Wide Bay area to explore ways to strengthen welcome and belonging in that region, participated as a team in the Darkness to Daylight walk, provided a submission to the Queensland Human Rights Commission for their review of the Anti-Discrimination Act and contributed to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes.

Last year the council indicated that they wanted to take more active role when it comes to government policy making decisions, which is why when the first opportunity arose with the parliamentary inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes I was more than happy to support them in making a submission. Council members were extremely well placed to provide advice to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee on the nature and extent of vilification and hate crimes as they impact culturally diverse cohorts.

Their submission represented the views and learnings of members based on their respective areas of influence and the culturally diverse Queenslanders they engage and work with. While it was their own words and based on their own experiences, I was pleased and incredibly proud to provide the foreword to their submission. I was proud when some council members appeared as witnesses at a public hearing of the committee so that their voices were heard. In their submission the council perfectly articulated the issues facing culturally and linguistically diverse Queenslanders: 'For far too many Australians and those living in Australia who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, racism remains a part of everyday life' and 'For the rule of law to function properly, it is crucial that those it seeks to protect feel confident to engage with the legal processes.' This is why I am proud to be part of a government that supports or supports in principal all 17 of the committee's recommendations and is already taking action on one recommendation, which I mentioned earlier, with the Attorney-General's announcement in May that we will legislate to ban the display of Nazi symbols of hate.

The current council's term came to an end on 31 July. I would like to thank all 11 members for their service over the last three years and for the wise advice that they have provided to both me and my predecessor, Minister Stirling Hinchliffe. Those members are: Dr Nora Amath, Ms Dea Bickey, Ms Irene Biedak, Dr Ignacio Correa-Velez, Dr Faiza El-Higzi, Dr Aparna Hebbani, Dr Nkosana Mafico, Mr Tej Man Monger, Councillor Natalia Muszkat, Mr Giridharan Sivaraman and Ms Vicky Yu. In March nominations to join the third council opened and a record number of applications were received, highlighting the council's reputation as a high-performing, committed and inclusive council that Queenslanders want to be a part of.

CHAIR: Minister, will you provide an update on the work being undertaken to improve social cohesion in communities right across Queensland?

Ms LINARD: The Palaszczuk government is committed to putting into action the principles of the Multicultural Queensland Charter and promoting Queensland as a united, harmonious and welcoming community. There is growing interest in migrant and refugee regional settlement and resettlement from larger centres to smaller localities. We know councils have an interest in building sustainable populations.

We recognise that welcoming communities that are prepared to embrace new arrivals are integral to sustainable regional settlement. That is why we are working closely with Welcoming Cities—an initiative of Welcoming Australia—regional councils and their communities to strengthen welcome and inclusion in local areas and facilitate resettlement pathways. We have committed \$680,000 to Welcoming Australia Ltd from 2018 to 2024 to explore leading practice in and support regional councils' ambitions for attracting and retaining new arrivals from diverse backgrounds and to celebrate the existing and future diversity of their communities. Welcoming Australia initiatives include Welcoming Cities, Welcoming Clubs and Welcoming Universities which aim to create futures where people of all backgrounds have equal opportunity to belong, contribute and thrive.

At the Welcoming Australia symposium 2022 my department and the Paroo Shire Council shared insights on the rewards of partnering for belonging. Queensland also won two of three inaugural Welcoming Cities awards for change, celebrating local efforts to strengthen social cohesion, with Nick and Kate Land of the Cunnamulla Bakery, located in Paroo shire, awarded the individual category for their efforts in supporting new migrant employees to connect and thrive in their business and the local community.

In June this year I took the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council to Hervey Bay, as mentioned, where Welcoming Australia facilitated a workshop exploring ways to support the Wide Bay region local governments to foster welcome and belonging for multicultural communities in regional areas. MQAC supported Welcoming Australia at this workshop by contributing their insights and lived experience in fostering greater welcome and belonging and social cohesion for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

I am pleased to advise that Fraser Coast Regional Council has subsequently joined the Welcoming Cities network and are planning for further community conversations in their region. I would like to thank Mayor George Seymour for taking the initiative to sign on to this important program as well as all the representatives from the Wide Bay regional councils who participated in the workshop.

Our government has also committed \$900,000 over three years to the Balonne, Bulloo and Paroo shire councils. We provide \$100,000 annually to each council to support them in their focus on strengthening welcome and inclusion in their local areas. Councils and their communities have led

welcoming events, celebrated stories of existing diversity, brought together steering committees and adopted community-led solutions that support new migrants in jobs and social activities whilst progressing regional opportunity for all.

Funding of \$100,000 was also approved for CatholicCare Social Services to partner with the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce in the development of a sustainable employment and resettlement pathway model for migrants and refugees wishing to relocate from Toowoomba to the Balonne shire. CatholicCare has aimed to establish employment relationships with local businesses, uncover job vacancies and enhance capability of partner organisations and stakeholders to enable sustainable employment pathways and inclusion for migrants and refugees in the local community. Enabling regional communities to embrace welcoming strategies and inspire local action is integral to sustainable regional settle and resettlement and social cohesion across Queensland and is something that our government will always support.

Chair, we have an answer to something on taken on notice.

CHAIR: Thank you for that very comprehensive response. Minister, I will hand to you to follow up on those couple of questions and then we will go to non-government questions.

Ms LINARD: The member for Surfers Paradise asked about the quantum of the Multicultural Queensland Month sponsorships by Telstra. Telstra's sponsorship is \$10,000 for each of the 2021 and 2022 Multicultural Queensland Months. Your question in respect of whether we can provide the committee details of the grant assessment panel members for Celebrating Multicultural Queensland grants, I can advise that the CMQ events panel for 2021-22 was made up of one officer from DJAG and four areas from within my department—different areas of the department and no-one from within multicultural affairs. The CMQ project panel for 2021-22 was made up of officers from the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Department of Education, my department and the Office for Youth Engagement in the Department of Environment and Science.

CHAIR: I call the member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you for that information, Minister. The reference for my next question is last year's estimates, when we discussed something that we have just talked about in government questions—that is, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and their engagement in the electoral process. Last year it turned out the ECQ had some connection in local government elections. Minister, will you engage with ECQ to progress the issue of more CALD representatives in all elections, not just the LGA ones?

Ms LINARD: Sorry, member. I know that you did raise this last year. Just to clarify, are you talking about more candidates standing across the board?

Mr LANGBROEK: No.

Ms LINARD: Can you clarify again what the question was?

Mr LANGBROEK: It was more about whether people from that group may need more assistance in understanding the electoral process. I think Mr Briscoe advised last year that they did actually engage in LGA elections. My question is: wouldn't it be valuable for us to have more CALD education about the electoral process in other elections as well?

Ms LINARD: Member, of course we are happy, whether it is as minister or with my agency, to continue to engage with the ECQ. That is the purpose of Multicultural Affairs. Their focus really is on making sure that agencies are aware of the barriers but also to lift capacity across government and agencies to ensure they are culturally aware and to help and support initiatives to address some of these issues and barriers. I am very happy to continue to work, as my executive director always will be, with that agency or any others to ensure that is the case because we do not want those barriers to participation, whether it is in elections or any other access to government services.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, could you provide a breakdown of the 34 staff in Multicultural Affairs?

Ms LINARD: A breakdown in respect of—

Mr LANGBROEK: Their positions, roles, descriptions. It does not have to be AO7s or whatever.

Ms LINARD: I might hand over to my executive director, who can give you a very good brief on the officers that we have in Multicultural Affairs. I would be remiss if I did not at least say—and I am talking as much to you as I am to those officers and their executive director, Wayne—that they do an extraordinary job and are so deeply connected in with community. They are always at the events I go to. What I love and see all the time is that they know everyone and the community knows them because

they are so totally invested in seeing our culturally and linguistically diverse communities have a voice into government and removing barriers so there is genuine positive engagement and that everybody can participate fully in the Queensland community. I am very proud of the work they do. Wayne, I hand over to you to provide as much detail as is appropriate of our amazing, hardworking staff—which has been 33 but is growing to 34 in the budget.

Mr LANGBROEK: So I noticed. I only see Michael Frawley normally.

Mr Briscoe: We are very excited about that 34th one, Minister, which is going to be a very unique position. It is a position dedicated to supporting the Australian South Sea Islander community and it will be a position filled by an Australian South Sea Islander. We are just about to go out to recruitment for that. We are very excited about that one.

I would get it wrong if I was asked to detail how many AO5s, AO6s and AO7s. Very generally, there is one executive director, one director and four managers at AO8 level, and three of those managers have one or two AO7s under them. Then we have a small number of AO6s, a couple of AO5s, an AO4 and an AO3. It is very tight. We also have a very small number who are specialists in the communications area who sit in the department's strategic communication and media unit and work extremely closely with us. I would agree with the minister that it is a very small number.

CHAIR: Minister, I am going to hand over to you for one minute to close before I then officially close proceedings today.

Ms LINARD: I will just clarify that there are two matters that we are taking on notice from the earlier hearing. Chair, I know you will clarify this too. Those matters relate to the youth justice portfolio—one question from the member for Maiwar that we will take on notice in regard to diversionary programs and the quantum of those, and a second question from the member for Maiwar in respect of longest period of seclusion. We will take those on notice for Monday.

Chair, thank you for the opportunity to provide a very brief closing statement. I would like to thank you, Chair, and all members of the committee, committee staff and parliamentary staff who have all supported this hearing. It has been a privilege to share more about the dedicated work undertaken by staff across my agency every single day who work to make a positive difference in the lives of some of Queensland's most vulnerable.

My sincere thanks go to my director-general, Deidre Mulkerin; deputy directors-general Rob Seiler, Kate Connors, Phillip Brooks and Arthur O'Brien; Chief Practitioner for Child and Family Services, Dr Meegan Crawford; and departmental executives Darren Hegarty, Michael Drane and Wayne Briscoe. I thank them for the always frank and fearless advice they provide. Each are consummate professionals who I believe serve the public interest admirably.

A warm thank you goes to the departmental staff involved in the estimates process including Melinda Rabbitt, Shauna Dennett, Catherine Donovan, Katrina Lyons and the CLLO team and the many, many staff who have made a contribution to preparations for this hearing. Special thanks go to my ministerial team: Bernadette, Cathy, Kirra, Johanna, Michael, Emma and Josh.

This government has set some ambitious targets and priorities for the children and families we support through Child Safety and Youth Justice. They are bold targets and will guide our work for many years to come. It is only by working together within our department, across government, with our dedicated sector partners, devoted carers and supporters, and cultural leaders that we can bring about real change. It is an honour to serve as Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, and your department for your work. The time allocated for the consideration of estimates of proposed expenditure for the portfolios of children and youth justice and multicultural affairs has expired.

I note that questions have been taken on notice—I thank you, Minister, for that—that are yet to be answered. The committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice, as you indicated, Minister, should be provided to the committee secretariat by 5 pm on Monday, 8 August 2022. If you need to confirm the exact wording of any questions taken on notice, the proof transcript of this session of the hearing will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within approximately two hours or you can watch the archive broadcast, or most certainly the committee secretariat would be available to you.

I thank you, Minister, Director-General and officials, for your attendance. I thank members of the department and members of the ministerial team. I would also like to thank my fellow committee members—the deputy chair, the member for Burnett; the member for Maiwar; the member for

Oodgeroo; the member for Cook; and the member for Nicklin. I certainly appreciate the collegial way in which our committee works to ensure the best possible outcomes for our Queensland community. I also thank visiting members who participated in the hearing today. It is wonderful as always, member for Surfers Paradise, to work with you and other members who visited the committee today.

I also thank our wonderful parliamentary staff who support our committee—Roylene and Lynda. Thank you so very much for your great support. I thank all of the parliamentary staff who work behind the scenes who have delivered a tremendous estimates experience over two weeks. It is a lot of work. Certainly, as members of parliament, we do appreciate your great work. On behalf of the committee, I also thank our Hansard staff, our parliamentary broadcast staff and all of the staff who work in the parliamentary precinct. I now declare this hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 6.17 pm.