

WEDNESDAY, 31 JULY 2024

ESTIMATES—COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE—TREATY; ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARTNERSHIPS; COMMUNITIES; ARTS

Estimate Committee Members

Mr A Tantari—Chair
Mr SA Bennett
Mr MC Berkman
Ms CL Lui
Dr MA Robinson
Mr RJ Skelton

Members in Attendance

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

In Attendance

Hon. LM Enoch, Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts

Mr F Gibson, Chief of Staff

Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts

Ms C O'Connor PSM, Director-General

Mr R Willmet, Deputy Director-General, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Ms K Parton, Deputy Director-General, Strategic Policy, Legislation and Reforms

Mr J Kidd, Deputy Director-General, Communities


Queensland Museum

Dr J Thompson PSM, Chief Executive Officer

Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art

Mr C Saines CNZM, Director

The committee met at 9.00 am.

 **CHAIR:** Good morning. I declare this hearing of the estimates for the Community Support and Services Committee open. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay our respects to elders past and present. We are very fortunate to live in a country with two of the oldest continuing cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whose lands, winds and waters we all share.

I am Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay and chair of the committee. The other members of the committee are: Mr Stephen Bennett, the member for Burnett and deputy chair; Mr Michael Berkman, the member for Maiwar; Dr Mark Robinson, the member for Oodgeroo; Ms Cynthia Lui, the member for Cook; and Mr Rob Skelton, the member for Nicklin. I would also like to acknowledge Mr John-Paul Langbroek, the member for Surfers Paradise. The committee will be joined by other members who have been granted leave to attend and ask questions at the hearing today.

I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at the chair's discretion or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasters of proceedings are available from the secretariat. Staff who are assisting our witnesses here today are permitted to use personal electronic devices in the chamber. I ask all present to ensure that phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode or turned off if not in use. I also remind everyone that food and drink are not permitted in this chamber.

This year the House has determined the program for the committee's estimates hearing. Today the committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2024 for the portfolios of the Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts; the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs; and the Minister for Tourism and Sport. I remind honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can only be raised during the time specified for the area as was agreed by the House. I refer members to the program set by the House, available throughout the chamber and on the committee's webpage.

This first session will examine the proposed expenditure of the portfolios areas of treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and the Family Responsibilities Commission until 10.30 am. We will suspend proceedings for an intermission from 10.30 am to 10.45 am.

I remind everyone that these proceedings are subject to the standing orders and rules of the Legislative Assembly. In respect of government owned corporations and statutory authorities, standing order 182 provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant portfolio or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts, the director-general, officials and departmental officers and members of the public. 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 director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and the Family Responsibilities Commission 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.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair, members and staff here today. I also acknowledge the First People of this country and all of our elders past and, of course, our elders into the future. The Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts reaches across a wide breadth of matters important to Queenslanders right across the state, including the record cost-of-living support administered by this department, the essential community services delivered in discrete Indigenous communities, progressing truth-telling, support for veterans, and ensuring we have a vibrant arts and cultural sector in Queensland.

My department is delivering \$20 million for cost-of-living relief and support for vulnerable Queensland families including \$3.3 million for emergency relief providers and \$2.2 million for the continuation of financial resilience support services delivered in partnership with community-based organisations. As part of our government's commitment to building stronger supported communities, this budget has locked in funding for new neighbourhood centres to be built in Agnes Water, Kowanyama and Labrador, and existing centres in Emerald and Manoora will be replaced.

Our government deeply acknowledges that there is a place for everyone in Queensland's vibrant and inclusive communities. I am proud to have recently released Queensland's first LGBTQIA+ Strategy and Action Plan titled Pride in our Communities. I am also pleased to announce that our first ever Young Queenslanders Strategy, co-designed with young people to help shape the future of this state, has now been released. Yesterday I had the opportunity to meet online with the talented group of young people who helped co-design this strategy to thank them for their hard work.

In the past 12 months alone, our state has experienced the impacts of climate change, with unprecedented extreme weather events spanning from the Far North to the south-east corner. We have seen the devastation caused by bushfires in Tara, Tropical Cyclone Jasper in the Far North, widespread destruction from the severe storms on Christmas Day in the south-east, and the ongoing impacts of Tropical Cyclone Kirrily across the state. In fact, this season we paid over \$80.1 million in personal hardship financial assistance, benefiting over 377,000 Queenslanders. That is more than the last three disaster seasons combined.

I am also pleased to announce a further increase to the maximum available funding amount for structural repairs following a natural disaster. For the second time since 2022, under the jointly funded Commonwealth and state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, the maximum per household available for these structural assistance grants will increase, this time from \$50,000 to \$80,000. Additionally, the essential services hardship assistance, which supports people who experience the loss or one or more essential services for five days or more, has been temporarily adjusted to benefit those who experienced an outage of four or more days. This temporary change will benefit up to 3,000 eligible applicants from Tropical Cyclone Jasper, the severe storms on Christmas Day in the south-east and Tropical Cyclone Kirrily. The department has commenced processing these additional essential services hardship applications and funds are already being released. As at yesterday, 30 July, \$258,900 has been paid, benefiting some 1,726 people.

With the United Nations International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples upon us on 9 August, I am pleased to inform the committee that this budget delivers more than \$23 million in critical funding to support the First People of Queensland through Closing the Gap initiatives, wellbeing and community safety programs, and reconciliation, truth-telling and healing. It is, however, extremely difficult to address the complex issues represented in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap without a true understanding of why the gap exists in the first place. This parliament voted with bipartisan support to establish the Path to Treaty Act in May last year to establish a truth-telling and healing inquiry, which just started its work on 1 July. Our government is committed to reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders by moving forward with mutual respect, recognition and a willingness to speak the truth about our shared history.

Repatriation of ancestral remains and secret sacred objects belonging to First Nations people is a basic human right and a crucial step in the healing journey for Queensland. Our commitment is underlined in the 2023-24 state budget, where we committed \$4.6 million over five years to support and amplify Queensland Museum's repatriation activity. Last year I met with the Museum of Vancouver to discuss their proactive and progressive repatriation program and to seek support for the return of Queensland's artefacts. I am so pleased to announce that the Queensland Museum has now established a groundbreaking agreement with the Museum of Vancouver to facilitate the return of First Nations artefacts and secret sacred material. The historic agreement with the Museum of Vancouver begins the process to repatriate artefacts back to Queensland. This engagement has generated interest from other international institutions interested in returning First Nations artefacts back to Queensland such as Sheffield Museums, which has proactively reached out to seek a similar agreement.

Investment in our arts, cultures and creativity is growing creative employment, economic participation and high quality arts experiences that deliver social and economic outcomes in our communities.

The second action plan of our Creative Together strategy, *Grow 2022-2026*, is continuing to renew and transform the state through creativity. This includes last week's launch of a First Nations fashion and textiles plan to back the ambition of First Nations-led industry, grow the sharing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories and increase economic participation for community-centred outcomes. Recognising the impacts of cost of living on the arts and cultural sector, particularly live music venues and festivals, viability and boosting grants through the 2024 state budget will small live music venues with up to \$1.6 million across the state to help offset operational costs and grow gigs for local artists.

Chair, all of this is about doing what matters for Queensland. We are delivering cost-of-living relief, progressing truth-telling and healing and showcasing Queensland's arts and cultures on the world stage as we prepare for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and I look forward to outlining more of our work today.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the committee for having me here as a guest. I welcome the minister and all staff, and acknowledge the original custodians of the land on which we meet and thank them for taking the time and preparation that I know happens for estimates. Minister, I want to refer to the 2023 Indigenous Language Grants, and I ask would not these grants have been able to be enlarged if the minister had not spent \$126,000 on a nine-day trip to the US and Canada last year?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Given that the question is in two parts, let me address firstly the matter of travel. As the member is fully aware, it is not uncommon for ministers in the duties of their role to travel to seek out opportunities to learn more about how we advance the interests of Queenslanders. The member would know that. As a former minister, he travelled twice in one term—to China and then to Japan and Indonesia, I believe, from the records. The member himself travelled last year overseas, so I know that he understands that it is not uncommon for this to occur.

With regards to the languages program, I am very proud of this program. The Many Voices policy is a key action of the Queensland government's Reconciliation Action Plan and contributes to realising the Queensland government's commitment to reframe the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Of course, what we saw was 25 community-based projects as a result of the investment last year. The key aim of this policy is to identify specific measures to achieve outcome and target 16 from the Closing the Gap national agreement.

There is a sustained increase in the number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken. In fact, for the Quandamooka people, the people that I am a descendant of and I identify as, our languages are being brought back and certainly supported by our elders. There have been many workshops on Quandamooka country ensuring we are learning as much as we can about bringing languages back.

I can go through some of the language grants that were provided. We saw some of these language grants distributed between communities like: Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council; Mithaka Aboriginal Corporation through the Mithaka Language Discovery and Preservation program, that they were funded to do; and the Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation, where they were gathering language and gathering community. There was a great outcome for the Centenary State High School Parents and Citizens Association who were looking to Indigenous language signage and imbedding Indigenous languages into the curriculum in the school, which is a fantastic outcome. We are seeing more and more of that right across the state. That is why this particular policy and the grant program that was established was able to support those 25 community-based projects, and I look forward to more projects coming from different parts of the state. I think it is an incredibly important part of addressing some of the issues that we have been seeing with regards to the closing the gap between life outcomes for First Nations peoples and the broader community, and it is an important part of what we do.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, why was the decision made to go to Canada and the USA for a nine-day trip last year in October?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. I hope that the member, as the shadow spokesperson for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships in this state, has been doing his own research about what is going on around the world with regards to advancing First Nations' interests, and I hope that in that research he has an understanding that Canada is internationally recognised as a global leader in closing the gap, in truth-telling and reconciliation and, of course, in development of modern treaty processes and progressive repatriation policies for the return of First Nations artefacts.

We are, in Queensland, in uncharted waters. The member, in his contribution to the debate on the Path to Treaty Act, spoke quite highly about the need to progress this work, the need to ensure treaty and truth-telling was at the heart of what we are doing. I am happy to quote some of the lines from his contribution. He would know that there is a lot of work to be done and that we need to get this right, and that there are other jurisdictions across the world who have learnt lessons with regards to these matters. It is absolutely on all of us to learn what other jurisdictions have been able to achieve and to bring those lessons back to how we do it here.

We have a short window for the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry, as per the debate that we saw in the House in May last year where that legislation was passed. The Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry needs to be able to make advancements very quickly. Certainly, with regards to the treaty institute, learning from the treaty and reconciliation commission in Canada definitely gives us some opportunities to move as quickly as possible. We know that they are engaging in modern treaty making against the backdrop of some historical treaty making—treaties that were already put in place. My predecessor certainly had travelled to New Zealand to learn more about the impacts of historic treaties and to bring

those lessons back. The idea of being able to look at modern treaty frameworks and how that impacts what happens here in Queensland, I think, is a very valid reason for us to ensure we are learning as much as we can from others. Certainly it will help in guiding the support that the Queensland government provides to not only the First Nations Treaty Institute but also to the historic Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry that began their work just a few weeks ago on 1 July, but have already begun doing a great deal of work to prepare for the three years that are ahead of them.

Mr LANGBROEK: Director-General, was there any departmental advice that New Zealand would be a better alternative destination than Canada and the USA?

Ms O'Connor: Good morning, Chair and committee. Good morning, member. Member, we already had the information from New Zealand. The minister has just conveyed that the former minister travelled to New Zealand, so that research was already done.

Mr LANGBROEK: Director-General, there has been obvious progress in these issues and there has been no subsequent advice that a trip to New Zealand would be preferable?

Ms O'Connor: Thank you, member, for the question. The work that New Zealand has done in this area is appreciated but we had that research. If you look across the world you will find that Canada, in particular, and British Columbia as a region are the world leaders in this area. We went there to get that information.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question refers to the invitation that I received yesterday from the minister about cultural agility training. Minister, why is this training being delivered by the Department of Resources?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. The letter that was sent to the member for Surfers Paradise yesterday was sent in good faith. I always hoped that anybody who is a spokesperson for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would have the cultural awareness, the cultural competency and the cultural agility to be able to do that work with some sensitivity and understanding. I have asked the member to undertake training in the past. I do apologise, I should have sent this letter earlier. It came to my attention that we had not been able to provide that opportunity for the member, but now that he has mentioned it in the public hearing—I was not going to mention it in the public hearing; I thought it was a private matter between the two of us—I absolutely encourage the member for Surfers Paradise to undertake the training that many different executive members across the Queensland government have been undertaking.

The department has a role in leading strategic cultural capability and reconciliation focused priorities, but, as you would expect, there are other agencies that have also been doing that work. Every single agency has a responsibility with regard to ensuring their executive and their staff have the cultural awareness and cultural agility to work in this space. Certainly, we have seen some changes to the Public Service Act to ensure we have Reframing the Relationship responsibilities on every single one of our agencies. In fact, we have been implementing the Reframing the Relationship plans that the agencies have completed. On many occasions, part of that has been the ability to ensure cultural capability and cultural agility. There are a number of different cultural capability programs. Certainly the one that the Department of Resources has been utilising, I have to say, has been a highlight. Many other agencies have been taking advantage of those workshops and working alongside that department to be on the same page given that that particular department does a lot of work around native title and the handing back of land. There has been some other work with regard to the renaming of locations that are incredibly offensive and have a historic meaning that I do not think fits a modern-day understanding of how we want to be as Queenslanders.

I have undertaken that training myself with my own ministerial staff alongside the executive of my agency; the director-general and others have also undertaken that training. I would highly recommend it to the member for Surfers Paradise, and that is why I wrote to him. I have been able to secure some spots for the member if he is interested in doing that workshop. That offer is extended to all members of this committee if the committee is interested in doing that work. I acknowledge the member for Burnett who has already been travelling to different locations in his work with regard to the Path to Treaty Act. I commend the member for Burnett for his work on that. He has been able to establish a number of relationships with people as a result of work with the former chair around the Path to Treaty Act. I wholly and solely encourage the member for Surfers Paradise to take up the offer and to do that training, as many other executive members of government agencies have.

Mr LANGBROEK: I did wonder why—given your diary says you did the training in August last year—it has taken 11 months for you to send it to me but I appreciate the invitation. My next question is: when I look at what the training is about, and I quote, ‘which explores the legislative frameworks that have historically impacted Australia’s First People by hearing real stories from First Nations Queenslanders and delving into the intent behind these frameworks’—

CHAIR: Member, what is the relevance of the question?

Mr LANGBROEK: What is described in the letter is different to what the minister said her reasons were last year. Last year it was about ‘understanding your relationship with staff and managing conflicts of interest’—which is it?

CHAIR: Can you get to the question, member?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am asking why there is a contrast between what the minister said last year were the reasons for having ‘cultural awareness training’—as it was called then—and the difference of what is being planned and being delivered by the Department of Resources. I would like to know—what is it?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for his sudden but welcome interest in the differences between different training programs. The fact is, it has been a year since we have had these estimate hearings and I called on the member to undertake cultural awareness training. I did bring his attention, of course, to other training that is available. It is very important and the fact that the member is trying to decipher between different types of training is a matter for him. It is not my job to ensure the member for Surfers Paradise is fully equipped to be a spokesperson for the shadow portfolio that he is assigned to—that is his job; that is why he is paid more than his colleagues to be in that space. He should be doing the research and equipping himself with being able to do the job. Out of courtesy, I have followed up and sent him a letter. The fact that he has decided that this is a point of contention for the estimates hearing speaks volumes about where he is still at. The member can take up whatever training he likes, but I still suggest that he will need to do that work if he wants to be a spokesperson for this portfolio. It is as simple as that, Chair.

Mr LANGBROEK: How much does cultural agility training cost to provide?

Ms ENOCH: As I said earlier, every single agency is now under some changes to the Public Service Act. The Public Service Act has within it a Reframing the Relationship commitment. Agencies are required to ensure they have Reframing the Relationship plans to implement. Inside of that is the training that is allocated to ensure staff members have the ability to work through the lens of fully understanding the impacts of past legislation and other things so that they can do their work. That is within the training budgets of each of the agencies. I cannot speak for the Department of Resources but certainly, training budgets are allocated and expended as per every agency’s remit. That would be something for the member for Surfers Paradise to ask of each agency.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, can you confirm that all ministers and the Premier have done this training?

Ms ENOCH: Again, the fact that the member for Surfers Paradise wishes to debate various types of cultural awareness training leads me to wonder whether the member has actually in the last 12 months undertaken any training whatsoever to justify him receiving extra money above and beyond his colleagues to be in the position that he is in. I can confirm that all members of my caucus have actually undertaken cultural awareness training funded from our own pockets.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, I have looked at the ministerial diaries for the last year. Your diary said that you had cultural capability training on 25 August and then on the 29th and 30th, cultural agility training.

CHAIR: Member—

Mr LANGBROEK: I am asking whether the Premier has done this training as well because it was not in his diary.

CHAIR: Member, it is regarding relevance. Could you explain how your question is relevant to the budget—

Mr LANGBROEK: It is about the department—

CHAIR:—and relevant to the portfolio we are actually debating at the moment?

Mr LANGBROEK: It is simply because in the context of this debate where the minister is asking me about my training, I am asking whether the leader of the government has done it.

CHAIR: It was in response to a question. On relevance, could you rephrase your question?

Mr LANGBROEK: It is clear it is about whether an example is being set by the government for something that the minister is asking me to do in opposition. I think it is very clear. I am asking about costs and whether all ministers and the Premier are doing this because it is not in their diaries. If it is so imperative, why are they not doing it?

CHAIR: I understand. I will give the minister the latitude regarding the answer to the question.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. I appreciate your intervention. It is quite astounding actually that the member for Surfers Paradise continues to debate the relevance of cultural awareness training, cultural agility training or cultural competence training and in some ways is arguing about whether he should even be doing this training. What I can say and what I have already said to the committee in this estimates hearing is that it is a political decision of the Labor caucus to undertake training. I can say that there have been two sessions that the Labor caucus has undertaken to ensure that the cultural awareness standards of our caucus are high. We are a caucus with three First Nations people in it. The first ever Torres Strait Islander person elected to any parliament in Queensland is sitting in this committee. She is part of our caucus. We also have an Aboriginal man in our caucus and myself, a Quandamooka woman with connections to the Kaanju in the Far North. There are three of us in the caucus. It is only right that our caucus has absolutely taken this seriously and ensured that all of us as a group of people have a base level of cultural awareness to inform the discussions of government. That has been our personal commitment paid for personally.

What the opposition does in this space is up to the opposition. That is a decision of the opposition. The fact that the member for Surfers Paradise is using up his time for questions to debate the relevance of various different types of training is to me telling. It is telling us that these things are not something that he is paying attention to. It is telling me that my letter to him, which was sent in good faith to assist him in his role, particularly when he is putting himself forward as the alternative minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships—and he expects that after October he will be the minister for this area. In good faith I sent him this to ensure that his capabilities are of the highest standard. The fact that he has spent time on these questions arguing the relevance or the difference between different types of training is quite astounding.

CHAIR: We have around 90 seconds remaining for this block of time. Would you like to move to another topic or ask another question?

Mr LANGBROEK: Sure, Chair. Thank you. It is about staffing matters and departmental operations. Minister, have you continued to have meetings where non-Indigenous staff are asked to leave?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. It is a good follow-on from the quite astonishing series of questions around the relevance of cultural awareness training. As I have already said publicly to the member and to this committee, there are cultural practices that are undertaken in your first interactions with other First Nations peoples. Once that is done—that is all that is required—then we get on with the business of getting work done. In answer to his question, no, there has not been a call for that. When I have come across new employees in the department, in those one-on-one conversations when people say, ‘Hello, this is so-and-so. They have just joined the department,’ I have quietly been able to say, ‘That’s wonderful, so-and-so. Who is your mob and where are you from?’ Then we are able to make the connections and make sure there are not any concerns about how we manage those connections. It is a very different set of circumstances to when you first step into this space as the very first First Nations person to have this role as the minister in this department. The answer to the question is: no.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I now move to the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: With reference to page 3 of the SDS can you update the committee on the progress of the First Nations Treaty Institute and the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the very relevant question. There remains, as the member knows, an unacceptable gap in the outcomes between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous peoples in this country in health, life expectancy, appropriate housing and education. The implementation and delivery of the Path to Treaty Act 2023 links to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap through priority reform 1 on shared decision-making, priority reform 3 relating to accountability and culturally safe and responsive needs, and target 6 supporting cultures and languages to be strong and flourishing.

In its first three-yearly review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap released in February this year, the Productivity Commission noted the positive jurisdictional reforms and initiatives being delivered in Queensland to help close the gap including, I must say, treaty and truth-telling processes including the passage of the Path to Treaty Act 2023. The Path to Treaty Act 2023 was passed with bipartisan support and commenced on 26 April 2024. All 34 LNP MPs supported the passing of the legislation and I quote the opposition when the member for Surfers Paradise said—

The LNP will not oppose the Path to Treaty Bill and see the bill as an important step forward in a better future for all Queenslanders and our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

What we need is enduring, long-lasting agreements between government and First Nations peoples. That is why our government signed a statement of commitment to reframe the relationship with First Nations peoples to deliver better, well-informed results that work for communities. That is why our government is absolutely committed to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and to the Path to Treaty.

Appointments to the inaugural First Nations Treaty Institute council and the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry were announced on 26 April 2024. The recruitment process to select members for the institute council and inquiry was co-designed with the Interim Truth and Treaty Body with an external recruitment agency engaged. A public expression of interest process was undertaken from late 2023 to early 2024. An independent panel of cultural experts, which included both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation, assessed the applications and made appointment recommendations.

The First Nations Treaty Institute is a statutory body operating independently from the Queensland government and since 26 April the institute has met on six separate occasions including a two-day council meeting to discuss in detail the transition from the Interim Truth and Treaty Body. Engagement has also occurred with the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. The inquiry commenced work on 1 July, just a few weeks ago. It will act independently to provide a public platform to listen and record stories, educate and build understanding about First Nations history and culture and make recommendations for next steps.

The work of the inquiry is guided by the inquiry's terms of reference, which were developed by the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts in co-design with the Interim Truth and Treaty Body and were published on the department's website in May 2024. The Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry has in its first weeks been undertaking work to commence community engagement and establish its work program. The Queensland government also has a role working with public institutions to provide access to documents, records and information and preparing to participate in the inquiry. This will be no small task. Our government is absolutely committed to Queensland's legislative Path to Treaty and I look forward to updating the committee further on the progress throughout this hearing.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 30 of the SDS, can you update the committee on the important work the Miles government is undertaking the repatriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestral remains and artefacts?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for this very serious and delicate question. As the member knows, the Queensland Museum cares for approximately 1,394 ancestral remains and secret sacred objects belonging to First Nations peoples from Australia and the Pacific. As the member also knows, I am sure from personal experience, repatriation is an emotional, community-led process that requires extensive consultation and very delicate negotiation, sometimes over many years. Over the past 30 years the Queensland Museum has taken deliberate steps to address its role in past wrongs and is recognised as the state body responsible for repatriation in Queensland, having completed more than 200 repatriations of ancestral remains and secret sacred items to country in partnership with government and First Nations communities across the globe.

The repatriation of ancestral remains and secret sacred objects of significant cultural heritage to country and community is a basic human right and a crucial step on the truth-telling, healing and reconciliation journey of Queensland and absolutely fundamental to closing the gap. Our government is absolutely committed to reframing the relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders by moving forward with mutual respect, recognition and a willingness to speak the truth about our shared history.

I am so very pleased, following a visit last year on behalf of the Queensland government, that we have secured an historic written agreement with the Museum of Vancouver that will begin the process to repatriate artefacts back to Queensland. Initially, a number of items will be transferred to the Queensland Museum, where they will be cared for before they are returned home to communities. As

I mentioned earlier in my opening remarks, this engagement has already generated interest from other international institutions seeking to return First Nations artefacts back to Queensland such as the Sheffield museum, which has proactively reached out to seek a similar agreement with Queensland. The Queensland Museum is also continuing its work with other worldwide institutions to secure the return of Queensland ancestral remains, secret sacred objects and general artefacts including the Natural History Museum in London, the Ethnological Museum of Berlin and a number of European museums.

The Miles government has provided \$4.58 million to the Queensland Museum over five years to support the repatriation of ancestral remains and secret sacred objects belonging to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland. Directly supported through this funding, the Queensland Museum has returned three ancestral remains to the peoples of Mapoon and has facilitated the return of one ancestor to the Weipa Peninsula people from Victoria. The Queensland Museum continues to build international relationships and work with overseas institutions to bring more cultural heritage items, ancestral remains and secret sacred objects held overseas back to Queensland.

The Queensland Museum is also recruiting five new positions to engage and enhance the Queensland Museum's relationships with First Nations peoples and to coordinate the care and management of ancestral remains and secret sacred objects held in care. The Queensland Museum cares for quite a number of remains and secret sacred objects belonging to First Nations peoples from Australia and the Pacific. I can also inform the committee that the Museum has also partnered with the Queensland United Australian South Sea Islander Council to co-design a framework that will guide repatriation of their Pacific Islander ancestors. The Queensland Museum is supported in this important work by the federal government's Office for the Arts, which negotiates and coordinates repatriation to and from Australia with the countries of origin. It is absolutely sensitive work and I know that the Queensland Museum remains committed to this work.

Mr SKELTON: Good morning, Minister. Minister, with reference to page 3 of the SDS, could you update the committee on the work of the Queensland Indigenous youth program?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for this question. As the member would know, with over 50 per cent of First Nations Queenslanders recorded as being under the age of 25 in 2021, it is a huge youth bulge, if you like, that happens with regard to First Nations people. That is why it is absolutely critical that right now we do everything we can to support this new generation on their personal leadership journeys. That is why I am very pleased to announce that applications have opened for the 2024 Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program.

The member would know that, since its inception in 2004, the Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program has empowered and nurtured over 720 young leaders, enhancing their abilities to drive positive change within their communities. This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the program's impactful journey, with additional Queensland government funding of \$302,000 announced as part of the 2024-25 budget. I absolutely encourage all First Nations Queenslanders aged between 18 and 25 who are dedicated to driving change and acquiring new skills to apply to join this year's program.

For the interest of the committee, the seven-day in-person component of the program will be held in Brisbane, Meanjin, from 23 to 29 November this year. During this time, successful applicants will engage in a wide array of activities designed to hone their leadership skills and build lasting connections amongst their peers and through networking opportunities with high-profile politicians. Maybe even the member for Surfers Paradise might attend, and that is an invitation. I know that members from both sides have attended that training for these young people, and I highly encourage that. They will also get the opportunity to network with elders, community leaders and representatives of the Queensland government more broadly. All of their travel, meals and accommodation will be provided as part of the funding and their involvement in the course, ensuring that participants can fully immerse themselves in this enriching experience.

This program also goes beyond the seven-day residential component, offering pre and post program support to ensure ongoing growth and impact. Participants can apply for funding to further their professional development or implement community change projects, extending the benefits long after the program concludes. I want to share one quote from a participant from last year. They said—

I returned to my community feeling ready and confident to effect real change, and not just talk about it but do it.

That is a great outcome from that course. I get to meet some of those young people across the state who are doing some incredible things and reflect quite positively on that training. No matter where you are on your journey, I encourage any passionate young First Nations Queenslanders to take hold

of this exciting opportunity to make a difference in your communities, build your confidence and create lifelong friendships and networks within an inspiring, culturally safe and supportive environment. I know that the program in its 20th year will continue to make a huge difference to young Indigenous people.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 3 of the SDS, could you update the committee on the importance of the Miles government's commitment to reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

CHAIR: Minister, you have about a minute and a half.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. I have mentioned already, in response to the member for Surfers Paradise's questions, the fact that we have seen some changes to the Public Service Act which ensure there are statutory requirements for chief executives to develop and publish a Reframing the Relationship plan. The key features of the Reframing the Relationship Plan are led by the eight components outlined in the Public Sector Act 2022. These components advocate for an inclusive public sector that supports dignity, belonging and greater involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I note that these changes to the Public Sector Act have been highlighted in the Productivity Commission's report on Closing the Gap. They are very much a key theme of the government which, along with our Path to Treaty legislation, are key in our work with regards to closing the gap and are highlighted to other jurisdictions as good practice.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I turn to the opposition for questions.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Chair. I have a question to the minister. I note that the government funded \$1.5 million in 2022-23 for alcohol management plans. Minister, will you advise the committee how much is planned for 2024-25 and what assessment of their effectiveness is carried out?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for that really important question and I very much welcome his interest in this. As we know, a great deal of work has occurred over many decades with regards to alcohol management. We are absolutely committed to ensuring communities are safe, thriving and empowered to manage and reduce alcohol related harm. This is with regards to target 13 of the Closing the Gap targets. Target 13 relates to households and families being safe. Alcohol management plans were initiated in 2002, supporting alcohol restrictions in 15 local government areas as part of a special measure under the Racial Discrimination Act to reduce alcohol related violence. For 22 years, alcohol management plans have been in place.

A review occurred in 2019, which found that a number of things were undermining the alcohol management plans. Among those was sly grogging and home brew in particular. That is why we moved to look at some of the community safety plans in particular locations. The member is right in saying that \$1.5 million for five communities around prevention was undertaken. In 2024-25, there will be \$2 million that will support locally-led initiatives under the renewed approach to alcohol management to support priority initiatives in community safety plans. It has been very important to work with identified communities to establish their community safety plans so that we can see improved community safety and wellbeing, reduce demand, address sly grogging and home brew and promote a safe drinking culture alongside enhanced therapeutic supports. Those community safety plans, as I indicated earlier, follow on from the review of the AMPs. Some plans include a renewed approach such as licensed premises and changes to carriage limits. Of course, any changes must meet a set of criteria. Those community safety plans are something that we are working with a number of communities around.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you for the answer, Minister. Is sly grogging still an issue?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for this question. It is a vexed issue. As the review mentioned in 2019, sly grogging and home brew, in particular, were very much undermining the positive impact of the alcohol management plans. After 22 years, many communities are wanting to manage these issues with a more modern framework, which is why we have moved to the community safety plans. As a result of some of these community safety plans we have seen a number of initiatives. I refer the member to question on notice No. 834, which asked a very similar question. I will go through some of the responses to this.

Five communities have been supported to implement community-proposed activities that address negative impacts of sly grog and home brew through locally developed community safety plans, as I have already mentioned. This is with regards to the \$1.5 million that the member very rightly has asked about. I will go through some of the activities that we have seen as a result of this investment.

Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council has been implementing the 'Sly Grog Go Away' initiative, which addresses harm minimisation and improves community health including trauma informed, culturally appropriate messaging and social impact community education activities. Over 500 health

checks were undertaken in partnership with Deadly Choices at community events, which is base data that has been created as a result of that. It is about getting that positive messaging back out there as part of their community safety plan.

Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council is implementing the 'Don't Buy Sly' initiative, which includes the design and delivery of 'Don't Buy Sly' collateral to support demand and harm reduction. There is also a focus on local youth engagement through collaboration with the Deadly Active Sport and Recreation Program to increase youth participation in healthy recreational activities. They were able to hold a local youth summit and local youth engagement activities that were delivered to support demand and harm reduction and empower local young people in their culture and identity. They reported that over 113 local young people have engaged in that, which is a positive step forward.

Aurukun is delivering the Healthy Lifestyle and Better Choices initiative under their community safety plan. That will draw upon the Wik Kath Min Community Values Statement to promote community health, empower youth through activities and promote community reporting, which is the other aspect of this. Aurukun has been working in this space to promote the reporting in community of sly grog to support supply reduction. This approach has been focused on empowerment through cultural connection, harm minimisation and community engagement.

Of course, those are just a number of the things that are happening. The member is right to raise the issue. It is a vexed issue. It is one that local council leadership and local eldership have been working very hard on. Certainly, the support of other agencies through health and education and also through the community justice groups have been important in being able to support the reduction of sly grogging, in particular, and home brew. These sorts of modern frameworks to manage alcohol and the reduction of harm in communities are going some way. Certainly, the further \$2 million that has been allocated for the community safety plans in this year's budget I hope will also make a difference.

I have had conversations directly, even since the March council elections, with the many new mayors and councillors and this is still certainly at the forefront of their thinking about how to manage some of the impacts of alcohol induced issues in communities, particularly, as the member mentions, the sly grogging and home brew. We will continue to do that work with those communities, particularly now as the new mayors—and there are many new mayors across the discrete communities—are finding their feet in their new jobs. We will continue to do that work with them and do as much as we can to support their initiatives on the ground, which of course is where we see the greatest impact. It is where that local leadership is happening. That is why we invest so much in ensuring that their voices and their ability to lead initiatives themselves on the ground are supported through government initiatives.

Mr LANGBROEK: Will the minister advise when the review of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act, which commenced in May 2019, will be completed?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for this question. It is an important question. When you look at what has been going on right across the country, it is brought into very sharp focus. The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act refers to target 15 of the Closing the Gap agreement where people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters.

It is important because Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage is the continuing record of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies. This is a rich legacy of physical evidence of past and present occupation of this country. It is incredibly important not just for First Nations peoples but also for every single Australian and every single Queenslanders to understand the absolute depth of heritage that belongs to all of us who are here in this country. When I speak to country I mean the physical aspects of all of that.

We remain committed to reframing the relationship with Queensland's First Nations peoples and as part of our assurance to the effective recognition, protection and conservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. As the member has indicated, there is some work that has already been happening in the space. We have undertaken thorough analysis of some feedback following consultation on an options paper for reform in Queensland to assist with identifying improvements to Queensland's cultural heritage laws. There is a broader context that is happening.

With regard to all of the work that has been undertaken—let me tell you that the Queensland Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act review process has been absolutely extensive. We have had multiple rounds of public consultation and stakeholder engagement on detailed reform proposals. More than 430 submissions and surveys have been considered with a wide range of stakeholders including First Nations groups, industry bodies and individuals. Submissions have been published on the department's website, so I am sure the member has had a chance to have a look at some of those.

The feedback has supported changes to various aspects of the legislation including identifying the Aboriginal party for an area, and First Nations people called for greater participation in decision-making in the protection of their cultural heritage. This is all happening against a national backdrop, as the member would know. At a national level, the Commonwealth government is working in partnership with the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance to develop federal reforms to strengthen cultural heritage protections.

We understand that the process for that review, if you like, will include public consultation engagement with First Nations communities, industry and government jurisdictions and will also include an exposure draft of legislation. As I understand it, there have been some targeted consultations federally that began in March this year. It is only right that any impacts from legislative changes at the federal level would need to flow on to what happens in Queensland.

All of our work that we have done is quite extensive. We now await some of the work that is coming from the federal government to ensure that as we make legislative changes it is reflecting some of the potential ramifications of what might happen at a federal level. We do not want to see areas of great culture significance, not just for First Nations people but for all Queenslanders, impacted in any way. We very much look forward to the strengthening of cultural heritage federally and the flow-on effects that will have to the Queensland legislation.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thanks for that answer, Minister. How many prosecutions under the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 or the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003 have been undertaken in the current parliament and what were the outcomes?

Ms ENOCH: While I am getting that information, given that is quite a specific question—

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy for you to take it on notice.

Ms ENOCH: No. I will get that information to come forward. Let me just say this: the department have been continuing their work in providing oversight of the cultural heritage data. We have the data sites that continue on. We have seen some further registration of cultural heritage sites added to our datasets to ensure they are utilised in any negotiations and works that have been occurring across Queensland. I want to acknowledge that part of the department that has been working very hard in that space. The act as it stands remains relevant, and all parties must adhere to that act as legislation that is currently active in this state. That is why those datasets are very important.

During 2023-24 the department has considered three matters associated with alleged breaches of the cultural heritage duty of care. Of these, one matter is still being considered by the relevant officers. In the other two cases it was determined by relevant authorised officers that there was insufficient evidence to progress the matter towards a successful prosecution.

Just to be clear, in addition to the statutory administrative functions, the department is also responsible for working with officers at the federal department that is responsible for this area regarding applications made under the provisions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act. In that work there are currently six applications seeking declarations for protection of cultural heritage in Queensland. Not only with regard to our legislation do we have those three matters, as I have just outlined, but there are also a further six matters that my agency is working with the federal government on.

CHAIR: We have about 2½ minutes.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is with reference to Path to Treaty on page 18 of the annual report. Is it the government's intention to cede ministers' powers to Indigenous Queenslanders, as is being sought in Victoria?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question with regard to the Path to Treaty. I do want to acknowledge that the member for Surfers Paradise spoke very passionately in the House with regard to his support for Path to Treaty. Not only the member for Surfers Paradise but also his leader, the Leader of the Opposition, spoke very passionately. In fact, he said—

Path to Treaty offers an opportunity to address this—

he is referring to some of the challenges we are facing today—

a fork in the road. Down one well-travelled path lies a discussion had for political purposes. It talks a big game but achieves little for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—a path where political battlelines are drawn but ultimately ends with a decade wasted and no progress made. Down the other path is a treaty.

They are the words of the Leader of the Opposition. I have already quoted the member for Surfers Paradise in his support of the Path to Treaty. He went on to say—

It is important to acknowledge that the journey towards treaty will not be easy and that there will be challenges along the way; however, by committing to this process we are acknowledging the past injustices that Indigenous peoples have faced and taking steps towards a more just and equitable future.

Mr BENNETT: I raise a point of order. Sorry to interrupt, Minister. With the time left, I ask that the minister be brought back to the question that was asked.

CHAIR: Minister, I know you are answering the question.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the chair and the deputy chair. It is important to understand that the Path to Treaty legislation is very clear about ensuring we are seeing very much a co-designed process around the treaty framework. The treaty institute has just been established. Their fundamental role will be to establish that institute and to work in co-design with the Queensland government—I state that again: in co-design with the Queensland government—to develop the treaty framework or treaties framework. That will be the guiding set of principles to enable treaty negotiations into the future.

Treaty negotiations will happen under the framework that the institute helps develop in co-design with the Queensland government. All of that is at risk because, as we have already heard from the member for Surfers Paradise and the LNP, they have turned their backs on their commitment to First Nations peoples with regard to the Path to Treaty. They have said they will tear up that agreement and repeal the legislation. We remain committed to this; we think it is the right thing to do. With regard to their response to the first three years of the Closing the Gap agreement, the Productivity Commission has identified the Path to Treaty Act as a fundamental part of addressing Closing the Gap. We remain committed to it.

CHAIR: In accordance with the motion of the House, I turn to the member for Maiwar and I welcome Dr MacMahon, the member for South Brisbane, to the table.

Mr BERKMAN: I will defer to the member for South Brisbane, Chair.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, the terms of reference for the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry allowed the inquiry to not consider a matter that has been the subject of another inquiry, investigation or proceedings in a court or tribunal. How does that affect the consideration of long-term issues which have previously been considered—for example, the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. It was something that the Interim Truth and Treaty Body considered very closely. The Interim Truth and Treaty Body did a great deal of work to outline their expectations of what the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry should do and what it should not do. They were very clear with us that it should not be a commission of inquiry and therefore it would not have those powers. They wanted it to be very community based and very much about truth-telling and healing, to be trauma informed and to have a community focus to all of it. The Interim Truth and Treaty Body has been able to look very closely at other jurisdictions, in particular Victoria, to see the kinds of lessons they were able to learn from the way that was set up and the terms of reference that have put in place there.

The Interim Truth and Treaty Body were very clear with us that they wanted to ensure the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry could get on with the job of telling the story of Queenslanders and not fall down every single aspect of other inquiries. They will be very focused on the needs and desires of the stories we need to see in Queensland. The chair and members who have just started their work are beginning their work plan. They are eminently qualified, they have had engagement and they are fully aware of the landscape in which we are operating. Of course they will continue to do that work. As the member knows, the matters that are the subject of the inquiry are pretty broad. They will look at: displacement; dispossession; settlement; the management of lands, seas and waters; assimilation and protection; missions and reserves; the separation of children and other family members; control over personal property; control over wages; policing and the criminal justice system—the list goes on. It captures a great deal of what we already know is in the public realm and is the backdrop for the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, for community members who would like to input into the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry what process can people go through at the moment?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. It is an important question. Right now, today, the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry is less than four weeks into operation. I have met with the chair, and I know the chair is already working through the work plan. There has been some consultation that

has already occurred. They are looking to begin opportunities for all Queenslanders to engage in the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. It is very much an inquiry that will include all community members and there is a very strong community sense in that. The work plan will be developed by the chair and the members of the inquiry, and I am sure they will ensure people can be engaged in that. That is the expectation. It is an independent inquiry and they need to be given time to develop that work.

Section 72 of the Path to Treaty Act requires the inquiry to conduct truth-telling sessions or hearings in a culturally appropriate manner and in a way that recognises the stress and psychological trauma that may be experienced by a person giving testimony or making a submission. The legislation also requires the inquiry to make guidelines about the following matters which may be published on the inquiry's website: procedures for recognising; procedures for supporting people; and procedures for preventing and mitigating stress et cetera. That work plan will be clear. It has only been 3½ weeks since they started.

In the conversations I have had already there has been a very strong desire to get the stories of people first. We know that many of our elders are reaching an age where they may not be here to tell their stories if we delay too long. That has certainly been my experience. The inquiry must be focused on the stories of people but at the same time understand the stories and records that are kept in our institutions, including: the State Archives, hospitals, educational institutions, police stations and other facilities. All of those records must be brought forward. When you consider our aging population and the very real gap in life expectancy, the stories of people will be incredibly important for the inquiry in its initial stages.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, how will the program of activities for the inquiry and the Path to Treaty process be affected by the government going into caretaker mode?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. I will answer it in two parts. First of all, right now, today, we are implementing the Path to Treaty Act as passed by the Queensland parliament in 2023. That is an incredibly important fact. As a result of implementing that legislation we have seen the standing up of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry, which began just 3½ weeks ago on 1 July, and we have seen the establishment of the First Nations Treaty Institute as a result of that. They have begun their work. Both of these bodies are independent of government, so they will continue their work through caretaker mode.

The second part of my answer to this question is that, as we have already heard from the Liberal National Party and the leader of the Liberal National Party, they do not have a desire to continue this work. The only way to impact the work of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry and the First Nations Treaty Institute—which under the legislation are independent of government—and to no longer allow those things to occur in this state would be for the LNP to come into the parliament and repeal the legislation. They have already made it clear that that is what they intend to do. Right now, while this government is here and in any future Labor government, we will continue to adhere to the legislation as per the Path to Treaty Act.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, with regard to some correspondence I sent last year, what consideration has the government given to the establishment of a new youth empowerment hub at Coopers Plains?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. I will just go back to the last question to clarify. In terms of the inquiry during caretaker, although they will continue doing their work with regard to engagement and planning, there would not, of course, be any public hearings during caretaker. That would be the impact of the usual caretaker rules.

Through the chair, can I get some clarification? The member is asking a question that belongs to the second session of this hearing. I want to get some clarification on that. I am happy to answer it but it is in the second session.

Dr MacMAHON: The correspondence had been on behalf of an Aboriginal health organisation which was specifically looking to set up a youth empowerment hub for First Nations youth, but if you would prefer that I ask it in the next session—

Ms ENOCH: It is for the next session because, obviously, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs is not just in a box somewhere. What if I answer the question in the next session? Is that okay?

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, are you happy with that?

Dr MacMAHON: Yes. With regard to the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry, if people have artefacts or items, what would be the process by which they could be handed over, and where might those artefacts end up?

Ms ENOCH: This is actually a really sensible and well-thought-out question so I thank the member for South Brisbane for this question. We have seen this in Victoria in their truth-telling and healing inquiry, where they saw a huge number of artefacts and sacred objects handed over. We see this in lots of different locations where people become aware of these items. They might have been in their grandad's shed and they thought it looked like something special but did not really know what to do with it. The Queensland Museum is preparing for that. I imagine the Queensland Museum will be the best location to do that work, and that is why they have just advertised for some more staff in the Queensland Museum to take care of some of those things that we might see.

We have been preparing for this after seeing what happened in Victoria. I think they had, from memory, over 5,000 artefacts given over, surrendered, so we have been preparing for the potential for this in Queensland. That is why we have seen this further investment in the Queensland Museum, to ready themselves for what might come of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Before I turn to the member for Cook, I would like to acknowledge school students in the public gallery this morning from Holland Park State School. Welcome.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 3 of the SDS, could you update the committee on the steps the Miles government is taking to help close the gap?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Today, throughout this first session of the hearing, I have attempted to provide information to the committee about the relevance of each of these questions to the Closing the Gap agreement. As the member knows, the Closing the Gap agreement is a national agreement. We are but one of all of the jurisdictions who have signed on to this agreement. We are three years into that agreement and we have been working very diligently to ensure we are doing everything we can to meet the expectations of the agreement.

I think everybody understands—and those who have done their work in ensuring they are across these issues would know—there is an unacceptable gap in life outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the rest of Australia. Even though we have more work to do in partnership with First Nations peoples to improve outcomes and reach the agreed targets, we are demonstrating measurable progress in a number of areas. We reached 95 per cent early childhood in 2021—that is target 3—where we have already met the national agreement target. We have reached a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights and interests in the sea, which is target 15b. We did that in 2023, meeting already the national agreement target. We are close to the target of 91 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birth weight, with Queensland currently sitting at 90.6 per cent, which was related to target 2 of the agreement.

For year 12 or certificate III attainment, which is target 5 of the agreement, and employment, which is target 8 of the agreement, we have increased by over five percentage points on both targets since 2016. For tertiary education, which is target 6, we have increased by nearly five percentage points since 2016. Agencies are continuing to work across government to deliver a range of initiatives to ensure progress towards targets for these socio-economic outcome areas. Significant investments, such as the Queensland government's commitment to free kindy, Queensland Health's First Nations health equity reform agenda and the Our Way generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, are key in making long-term progress.

Along with all jurisdictions signed up to the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Miles government has delivered on its commitment to reframing the relationship with First Nations peoples through the bipartisan passing of the Path to Treaty Act 2023 and the establishment of the First Nations Treaty Institute and Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. The Queensland government is working in partnership with all government departments, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition and First Nations peoples, including community leaders. This commitment highlights a new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that uses genuine partnership approaches to drive real outcomes for First Nations peoples and communities.

We have invested \$1 billion in the Women and Girls' Health Strategy, which has a strong focus on health equity for First Nations peoples, we have appointed Queensland's inaugural First Nations Justice Officer and we have committed \$41 million to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services to improve the safety and living conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families who may be experiencing vulnerability.

Through all of these achievements, we are committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, reframing the relationship and closing the gap on life outcomes for First Nations Queenslanders. The 2024-25 budget provided increased funding for community legal

centres, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service and engagement with community justice groups. Our approach to improving outcomes will be informed, as you would expect, just like every other jurisdiction, by the recent Productivity Commission review on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 3 of the SDS, could you update the committee on the outcomes of the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Cook for the question. I want to acknowledge her strong advocacy and support over many years for this landmark reform. I also acknowledge the commissioner, Commissioner Maza, who has led this world-first process. I would like to congratulate him, as our government has just reappointed him as a commissioner for a further 12 months. I thank him for his hard work to date and we look forward to continued efforts.

As members would be aware, these laws provide legal recognition of Torres Strait Islander families' continued use of traditional child-rearing practices. Legally recognising Torres Strait Islander traditional child-rearing practice is a momentous step forward to a reframed relationship with First Nations people and acknowledges the strength of Torres Strait Islander culture. The uniqueness of the act is the recognition of an immemorial Torres Strait Islander cultural practice still being practised by Torres Strait Islander families today and its preservation in Queensland legislation. The act is designed to recognise the rights and responsibilities of cultural parents who are party to traditional child-rearing practices. This is done through the submission of a cultural recognition order, which permanently transfers parentage of a child to the cultural parents through addendum to the birth certificate.

Since inception, 41 cultural recognition orders have been granted. This is a huge number. These are often highly complex orders that require working closely with applicants. What I can announce today for the committee is that an improved, more accessible cultural recognition order application form has been developed to make it easier for families to engage in the process. It is now a single form for child and adult applicants and includes a version in Yumplatok, Torres Strait Creole. That is very much recognised as the most common language, and including information in this language makes the form more accessible.

CHAIR: With that, the committee will now adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 10.45 am.

Proceedings suspended from 10.30 am to 10.45 am.



CHAIR: I welcome back the minister and officials. I also welcome to the table Dr Rowan, the member for Moggill. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of communities and the arts open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the shadow minister.

Dr ROWAN: Good morning, Minister and Director-General. Minister, with reference to the new performing arts venue at QPAC, during the 2021 budget estimates the director-general stated that the department and the state government were staying within the funding envelope and that—

I meet regularly with Lendlease, and of course they have signed the guaranteed contract sum for that envelope.

Given this and your response to pre-estimates question on notice 17 attributing the \$9 million cost blowout to 'prolongation fees', can you clarify whether the prolongation fees are included within the guaranteed construction sum contract, or were they in a separate contract?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. First, I seek to correct the record in relation to the final question of the previous session. In answer to the final question of the last session I said that 41 cultural recognition orders had been granted. The commissioner has informed me that, as at today, it is actually 50 cultural recognition orders.

CHAIR: Thank you for that correction, Minister.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for his question. As I have said publicly, Lendlease, the builder, has advised Public Works, who are the managers of the contract, that the new performing arts venue at QPAC will not be delivered this year. I am advised that the venue is now scheduled for completion next year and that the revised completion date reflects, as I have said—I think the member knows this as well—that a number of challenges have impacted project delivery including major flooding, several

major subcontractor insolvencies, inclement weather and supply chain pressures. Of course, the new performing arts venue is not the only major building that has been impacted by these things. I have on record said that, as the arts minister, I am incredibly disappointed by that. When it is completed, it will be an amazing part of the arts landscape in Queensland.

What I can say is that further project costs will be incurred due to the delay in the overall program timing as advised by Lendlease. These additional costs are not part of the guaranteed construction sum. That is set. As a result of the delay by Lendlease, we have allocated a further \$9 million to support what is mandatory, if you like, project management and technical advice that must occur alongside a major project. The department of public works is the lead for the delivery of that project, and these costs have to be put in place to be able to continue doing that work. It is project management and technical advice to deliver the new performing arts venue.

These prolongation costs were triggered as a result of the delay that was advised by Lendlease. Of course, the contract delivery is part of the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works, who hold the contract for the project. Our agency, as a result of the triggering of the prolongation costs, was able to secure the \$9 million for the mandatory items of project management and technical advice.

To be clear, the guaranteed construction sum remains the same. I want to thank all those who were involved in establishing that agreement in the first instance. That guaranteed construction sum means that we will be receiving a building that would be worth a lot more in today's market. The prolongation costs, triggered by the fact that there has been a further delay announced by Lendlease, are part of being able to make sure we can continue doing what the project management is required to do.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, I understand there is a separate contract with the department of public works to actually cover the \$9 million—so the \$9 million will be paid to Lendlease?

Ms ENOCH: My understanding is that the \$9 million is for fees for statutory requirements, project management and expert consultant costs, storage costs for equipment and public art fabrication. These costs are unrelated to that guaranteed construction sum. It is certainly an agreement between Arts Queensland and Public Works that is not in that guaranteed construction sum.

Dr ROWAN: To clarify, in relation to the \$9 million, with the agreement between Arts Queensland and Public Works, is the \$9 million coming from your department or is it coming from Treasury? Where is the \$9 million coming from?

Ms ENOCH: Certainly the \$9 million has been provided to my department to be able to honour the agreement with Public Works.

Dr ROWAN: An additional \$9 million has gone to your department which is then provided back to Public Works for these additional prolongation fees as part of this project?

Ms ENOCH: That is correct. Just like any other project where the prolongation fees might be triggered by a delay, there are some statutory measures that have to stay in place alongside the management of the project.

Dr ROWAN: That was additional money. Thank you. Minister, with the practical completion date for the new performing arts venue now pushed back to October 2025, are you able to tell Queenslanders when the curtains will be raised on the first performance in this new venue?

Ms ENOCH: We have been informed by Lendlease that practical completion will occur in 2025. That is the latest advice from Lendlease, the builder. There is some expectation that there will be some opening of the doors to audiences in 2026, is what we have been told?

Dr ROWAN: But an actual date? We do not have a specific date as yet?

Ms ENOCH: I think the member would be aware that there is a great deal of work that has to happen once practical completion is done, and certainly QPAC will be doing that work. I can tell you now that they will be moving as quickly as possible because we are all very keen to see that happen. What I can say is that, in the meantime, despite all of these challenges, there has been some strong progress that has been made. The member will have seen some of the glass panelling that has been erected. That feature glass facade which is fully suspended from the roof, comprises some 217 panels of approximately 2,400 square meters of UV coated glass. It has been amazing to see all that go up. Of course, there has been a great deal of work that has been happening inside, along with the internationally recognised Torres Strait Islander artist, Brian Robinson, who has been selected to

develop his concept design for a distinctive piece of public art for the new theatre. A great deal of work is already underway and I know that the staff at QPAC and the board of QPAC are very keen to see that and are looking forward to seeing all that come to fruition.

Dr ROWAN: I will move on. I heard the testimony earlier today of the minister and the media release given in relation to the repatriation of First Nations remains. Director-General, of the 1,394 ancestral remains and sacred objects that are held by the Queensland Museum Network and which are to be repatriated, can you please provide a breakdown of how many of these remains and items belong to Australian First Nations communities and the number of remains and items that belong to non-Australian First Nations communities?

Ms O'Connor: I request that Dr Jim Thompson, the head of the Queensland Museum, provide that level of detail. Sorry, I have to do that through the minister. I overstepped.

Ms ENOCH: I am happy for the director-general to bring forward the CEO of the Queensland Museum.

Dr Thompson: Good morning. Of the 1,394, approximately 890 are ancestral remains and the others are secret/sacred objects. Of those ancestral remains, 67 are from the Pacific Islands or other areas—from Borneo right through to Fiji, really. They are ancestral remains from those areas. We say there are 65 from the Pacific Islands plus two from Borneo which do not fit into that category. They are the only items within those 1,394 that are not either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Dr ROWAN: Director-General, given this year's budget papers do not reveal any increase to the \$4.6 million that was allocated last financial year for the First Nations Repatriation Program, is this allocated funding sufficient to complete the full repatriation of remains and items by 2027?

Ms O'Connor: I thank the member for the question. The money in the 2023-24 budget that I think you are referring to was \$4.6 million over five years to support that work to occur, and we continue to work with the Queensland Museum on the level of repatriation activity that is possible.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, given that there were three items that were repatriated in 2023-24, as I understand through your earlier testimony, if we look at that period of time, it would really take the Queensland Museum approximately 465 years to repatriate all items, so I really want to know are you able to guarantee that all remains will be repatriated by the end of 2027, given the funding that has been allocated, which is that \$4.6 million?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for his interest. To be clear for the member, there is a very delicate process and deep consultation that occurs with those communities who are the descendants of these ancestors. They have to be ready to receive it and, of course, the museum works very closely on that. It is not a pace that the Queensland Museum or the Queensland government necessarily dictates to communities; it is something that happens over a period of time. I can speak from personal experience of ancestors whose remains have been returned to Quandamooka country, for instance. It took many years of getting it right and getting ready. It is a process that is not determined just by the Queensland government. The funding has been allocated over a five-year period to ensure we have all the resources required to be able to do that work with communities. For some communities, they have made decisions to not receive their ancestors at this point. Not to reveal too much about personal decisions of communities, for some, they make the decision for the Queensland Museum to retain those for a period of time until they are ready. There is a very delicate conversation and set of consultations that happen between the Queensland Museum and communities.

What I can say is the increased number of FTE staff that have now been allocated to the Queensland Museum with regards to the repatriation piece will go a long way in helping with some of those very in-depth, comprehensive, deep consultations and negotiations that happen. I know that the Museum has been working very hard around the recruitment of those positions. It sits inside a broader body of work that they have just released. I know that the member for Surfers Paradise was at the launch of that strategy with regard to First Nations work as well. There is a very strong focus on this—that is why the funding was provided last year. As you have heard from the director-general, she continues to work with the museum on their needs going forward. To be clear: it is not a timeline that is dictated by the museum or the Queensland government; it is something that happens in deep consultation with those communities that are seeking the return of their ancestors.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, to clarify that: the timeline of repatriation is responsive to those communications with First Nations communities, as well as additional funding that may be allocated as part of the program. There is flexibility in both the timelines and the potential for additional funding to be allocated; is that correct?

Ms ENOCH: I think if the member was to put himself in the shoes of First Nations peoples—the idea that your ancestors might be kept somewhere else. I have met with traditional owners who have escorted the remains of their ancestors from European museums for instance. Where the Queensland Museum has been working with the federal government on the repatriation of ancestors from a European museum, I have seen traditional owners escort them from that location in Europe all the way back to Brisbane for them to sit for a while in the Queensland Museum and then make their final journey back to their homeland. It is a very delicate, very deep set of consultation that occurs. The funding that has been provided helps to facilitate that. Certainly the increased number of staff who are allocated through the budget is an important step, but we cannot say that all of this will be done by tomorrow because we have to have those conversations and the communities have to be at the forefront of the decision about the steps we take together.

Dr ROWAN: Director-General, I know the minister mentioned the increase in staffing costs, but what is the budgeted cost to increased staff within the program from 3.5 full-time equivalent to six full-time equivalent?

Ms O'Connor: We have seen an increase in activity and expenditure for repatriation in the last three years. Some of that, of course, will be staffing costs and other administrative costs. In terms of the staff, to go from 3.5 to six FTE in 2024-25 is almost a doubling of staff at \$100,000 each—around \$300,000.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, I want to come to your ministerial study tour, which I know has been canvassed, in October of 2023 on which \$126,000 was spent. You visited multiple locations in New York, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art on 5th Avenue, to discuss First Nations repatriation programs.

CHAIR: Come to the question, please.

Dr ROWAN: Thank you, Chair. Can you please advise how many First Nations remains that are held in the Queensland Museum Network need to be repatriated to New York?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. To be clear: as is the requirement of all overseas travel, there must be a full and open report provided to the parliament. That report is public and it makes very clear the multiple meetings that occurred right across the breadth of my portfolio not only with regard to treaty, truth-telling and repatriation but also with regard to communities. I visited a number of community controlled organisations and a number arts related organisations. We have certainly seen the relationship develop between QAGoMA and key organisations in other countries. I believe that the member attended the European Masterpieces exhibition that was on loan from the Met, so I think the member knows that there are multiple relationships that occur across the full breath of my portfolio. That was the nature of the visit. That is what has been reported in the public report—the full breadth of my portfolio was the filter through which the meetings occurred.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, a follow-on question. You said in your earlier testimony that there had to be remains repatriated from Vancouver and Canada; were there any from New York that needed to be repatriated?

Ms ENOCH: What I can say from the meeting that I had with the Metropolitan Museum of Art is that the Met is currently renovating an entire wing of the museum to establish a new Indigenous peoples gallery for international visitors. This meeting with the Met was arranged to inform Queensland's development of First Nations cultural centres in Brisbane and in Cairns. We have not done that before in Queensland so to be able to ascertain some good practice around establishing the First Nations cultural centres here in Queensland was an important part of that conversation. They have had collections donated by various estates. The new gallery will display artworks and belongings of First Nations people to provide a respectful and educative experience for international visitors. The providence and repatriation of belongings and art have been some important first steps for them. They have been conducting detailed research and community engagement to ensure their displays are culturally appropriate. They have a new Indigenous peoples gallery which will include separate displays of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and belongings and they have been working with stakeholders in Australia to inform these. Queensland, of course, through the various relationships that we already have, will continue to liaise with them to provide assistance in this work and to promote Queensland First Nations art and cultural experiences.

As the member might know, this government has been committed to working on the development of First Nations cultural centres in this state. It has been in the making for decades. I remember being in meetings at Musgrave Park where, several governments ago, there was a commitment to establish a cultural centre in Brisbane. We have heard from multiple sources, including Tourism and Events

Queensland in their most recent plans, of the need for a focal point around First Nations cultural experiences and a cultural centre. We have been able to expand on that to have one in Brisbane and one in Cairns and we have been working on the business cases. To have a look at what is going on internationally to inform some of that work will assist with the development of what we need to ensure are absolutely world-class First Nations cultural centres here in Queensland, particularly as we get ready for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We are able to inform those business cases that are being developed at the moment with some of the practices that we are able to see in other countries, whilst we are there discussing other issues.

Dr ROWAN: I note that as part of this \$126,000 study tour you stayed at the Fairmont Hotel, along with your director-general, executive director and chief of staff. It is described as Edmonton's most luxurious hotel—

CHAIR: Member, your question contains a speech at the start of it; can you kindly get to the point of the question, please?

Dr ROWAN: The question is: who made the determination to stay at this hotel? Given that the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, which is just 800 metres down the road, is approximately a third of the price, I want to know who made the determination to stay at this hotel and why, and why were cheaper options not looked at given the expense of this particular hotel?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. As the member I hope is aware—and I would be surprised if he books his own travel—the itinerary that was booked for this trip was of course entirely within the guidelines and in accordance with the Ministerial Handbook and the travel was approved by the former premier. I understand that the accommodation bookings were made on the recommendation of our in-market representatives and took into account the location of meetings. That is how that was booked.

CHAIR: I will now call the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: With reference to page 4 of the SDS, how is the Miles government supporting Queenslanders with vital cost-of-living relief?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Of course, the member knows that our new Premier, Steven Miles, and our Labor government are committed to supporting Queenslanders as we continue to navigate national cost-of-living pressures. Many Queenslanders are facing unprecedented financial pressures and are struggling to meet the rising cost of living, including the cost of food and household bills. That is why cost-of-living relief is the Miles government's No. 1 priority.

By making mining billionaires pay their fair share and keeping electricity assets in public hands, our government is taking \$1,000 off every Queensland household's power bill with an additional \$300 from the Albanese government. We are slashing all public transport fares to 50 cents from 5 August—not long to wait now. We are reducing rego by 20 per cent. We are giving \$200 FairPlay vouchers to some 200,000 Queensland families to help with the cost of kids' sport, and of course that is a great outcome. We are abolishing stamp duty for first home buyers on homes up to \$700,000. In terms of my agency, we are continuing to work with critical frontline agencies to help support people experiencing financial hardship and to help them build their knowledge and resilience to weather the remainder of this cost-of-living storm and any future challenges.

When budgets are tight we know that food insecurity can become an increasing issue for households, so we need to make sure that quality and affordable food options are available for all Queenslanders. That is why the Miles government is committing \$7.7 million over the next four years to support increased food distribution to Queensland communities. This includes \$3.57 million over the next two years to OzHarvest and SecondBite for their food recovery and redistribution services. An additional \$2.883 million over the next four years will be allocated to Foodbank Queensland for the establishment of a food distribution hub in Townsville and to increase their warehouse storage capacity in Brisbane. Importantly, we are also investing \$1.3 million for community food education programs as part of the \$15 million being allocated to school and community food programs.

While food relief provides very immediate and tangible support for Queenslanders, we also know there are many other support services needed right now. That is why we have invested \$3.3 million for emergency relief which will be allocated to 195 emergency relief services across Queensland. For the committee's knowledge, emergency relief provides assistance to people in that immediate financial crisis and can offer access to vouchers for food and other essentials, fuel, transport or contributions to payments of third-party accounts like utility bills. I know firsthand from talking to people in my own community the difference that this emergency relief can make, even if it is just a stopgap measure whilst individuals and families are getting through a particularly tough time.

We know that while immediate support is needed, including emergency relief, Queenslanders also need support with their longer term and often complex financial situations. That is why a further \$2.2 million will be invested to continue the Queensland Financial Resilience Program providing financial counselling and resilience services in 20 high-priority areas across Queensland. Our budget, the Miles Labor government's budget, is focused squarely on delivering those critical cost-of-living measures, supporting those in need, providing much needed relief and doing what matters for all Queenslanders.

Mr SKELTON: My question is of the minister. With reference to page 4 of the SDS how is the Miles government addressing the critical food security concerns across the state?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Nicklin for this question. I know this is a matter that is at the forefront of his concerns as well. I know he has been working with community organisations across his electorate very closely on these. We know that many Queenslanders are being challenged by rising costs because of these national cost-of-living pressures, including impacts on the cost of food and household bills.

The Miles government is committed to working with food distribution organisations and local community groups to ensure vulnerable Queenslanders have access to adequate levels of food. As we know, food is one of the first things that households quite often cut back on to meet these rising costs: changing their dietary requirements et cetera and their usual ways of feeding their families. Sometimes this leads to food insecurity amongst Queensland communities. That is why the Miles government has committed an additional \$2.883 million to Foodbank Queensland, as I mentioned earlier, over the next four years to provide extra food distribution points in Brisbane and Townsville to service the growing number of Queenslanders and member charities seeking its assistance. Of course, that has been growing. I have met with Foodbank on numerous occasions with regard to their ask and their need to support their growing member charities and the growing need that they are bringing forward. We are also delivering \$3.57 million to OzHarvest and SecondBite to enable even greater support for food recovery and redistribution, including on the Gold Coast, which is important, and in the Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Mount Isa areas.

We are very proud to be working with these organisations to ensure that as many Queenslanders as possible have access to affordable food options. The increased investment for Foodbank, OzHarvest and SecondBite will provide cost-of-living relief for more families who are struggling. I think that is the right thing to do. The critical support of these organisations has been evidenced through the experience of the community food pantry in Townsville where the number of people accessing the pantry each week has more than doubled. That is a common story that we are hearing in other locations, including families who may not have gone to neighbourhood centres or these support services in the past. New families potentially are presenting. That is why organisations like OzHarvest that are delivering to these community pantries are making a real difference.

In this budget we have also committed \$1.3 million to support food and nutrition awareness and education for families of school-age children through community focus programs, being able to ensure that families have all the skills they need to find new ways to support the food security in their own homes. We have also doubled the funding for Meals on Wheels Queensland. This followed a meeting the Premier and I had with them. This builds on our investment of \$2.7 million in last year's budget to extend and expand our government's School Breakfast Program, particularly in communities experiencing hardship across Queensland. This year this program will continue to support vulnerable families and we will continue to do this work with key organisations to support families in need.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 4 of the SDS, could you advise how state funded neighbourhood centres are providing cost-of-living support to Queenslanders in need?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for her question and her support of neighbourhood centres. We are now seeing neighbourhood centres becoming front and centre with regards to supporting communities. At their core, neighbourhood centres are inclusive and welcoming spaces for everyone, which makes them vital during this cost-of-living challenge as we strive to address social isolation and loneliness. Neighbourhood centres are continuing to see increased presentation, as I have already mentioned, from community members who need access to emergency relief, for instance, and other services. Our investment has seen neighbourhood centre funding increase substantially, almost doubling the base funding. It has seen the biggest uplift in funding in the history of neighbourhood centres, with an increase of \$51.8 million over four years to lift that minimum base funding for a centre. Like I said, it is almost doubling that average base funding.

We are also investing in new and replacement centres, with six new neighbourhood centres for Rockhampton, Agnes Water, Kowanyama, Palm Island, Ripley and Labrador and four replacement centres for Bribie Island, Manunda, Emerald and Manooora in the construction pipeline. Emergency relief plays a critical role in the community, assisting people experiencing immediate and financial hardship. It also provides access to a range of support, including vouchers for food, transport or fuel and other essential items, as I have mentioned. It can also assist people with contributions towards their bills. This year we are investing \$5.8 million to fund emergency relief through, as I said, 195 providers across Queensland which includes neighbourhood centres.

We know that when people present to a neighbourhood centre they can also be supported to access a wider range of complementary supports, depending on the centre, such as finance counselling. That is why we have extended our commitment to the Queensland Financial Resilience Program through to the end of the 2024-25 financial year. This program, delivered through Good Shepherd, leverages from existing social infrastructure investments such as neighbourhood centres and supports a connected approach to service delivery, resulting in greater wraparound support and opportunities for longer term and more sustainable outcomes for individuals.

We have also seen a commitment to our Community Connect initiative, currently located in 30 neighbourhood centres. The Community Connect workers respond quickly and effectively to provide tailored responses that support individuals and families. This year we have committed \$4.2 million for the delivery of 32 Community Connect services embedded in neighbourhood centres in disadvantaged locations. This is an extension of the 30 existing Community Connect services. I know from firsthand experience the difference that makes in neighbourhood centres. In Bundaberg, for instance, we have seen a Community Connect worker who is making a real difference in people's lives and helping to navigate the wide range of supports that are in place to support people in their time of need.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 4 of the SDS, will you update the committee on the delivery of the School Breakfast Program as well as the School and Community Food Taskforce?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. The School Breakfast Program is something that has made a massive difference to the young people accessing that service. We know that two-thirds of Australian teachers report children come to school hungry or without lunch. This food insecurity means that more and more Queensland children are going through their school day on an empty stomach as families face some of these pressures. As a former high school teacher, I know exactly what that looks like and feels like and the disadvantage that creates for young people. As they are focusing on their education and their learning in classrooms, the ability to ensure that the food security they have is sound actually does have an impact on their education outcomes. That is why providing school breakfast and lunch programs helps break down the stigma often associated with food insecurity. Children who arrive at school without breakfast or lunch can receive a meal in a safe, social space and feel included and able to interact with their peers, teachers and volunteers in that non-formal setting.

As part of this year's record cost-of-living budget, the new Miles government will deliver \$15 million for a School and Community Food Relief Program. Of this, \$1.3 million has been committed to my department to support food and nutrition awareness and education to families of school-age children. The Minister for Education and I have established and co-chair the School and Community Food Taskforce, which met for the first time in early June. This taskforce is providing expert advice, helping to generate innovative solutions that promote access to healthy food and drink for Queensland children, young people and families, given the link between wellbeing, general health and engagement in learning—so pretty important.

Just over \$10 million has been committed to the Department of Education to deliver food programs in schools, and \$3 million has been committed to fund community and school initiatives endorsed by the taskforce. This is on top of our investment in last year's budget of \$2.7 million over two years to extend and expand school breakfast programs. This increase in funding has supported almost 200 schools across the state. This is in addition to approximately 300 schools that were already providing a school breakfast program through Queensland government funding. Around 500 schools across Queensland are now supported to provide a breakfast program, which is making a huge difference in those communities.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I call the opposition for questions.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Chair. My question is with regard to the department of communities. Minister, you spoke about base funding for neighbourhood centres, and I know of a centre that I went to where the base funding is \$260,000. The manager informed me that, in terms of their role

and the person who is the second in charge or the person who is in the centre, they are unable to pass on the wage increase both to themselves and to the other staff member given that their annual increase is based on more experience. Is the minister aware that minimum wage increases are not being paid across all staff in neighbourhood centres?

Ms ENOCH: What I can say is that this biggest uplift in funding is almost doubling the average base core funding for those neighbourhood centres. Previously, basically only one person was getting funded out of that and people had to be very clever in the way they were doing that. In terms of the CPI, what we saw from the Treasurer recently was an announcement of a 3.9 per cent increase in CPI allocated to those community services' funding—something which I know QCOSS were absolutely thrilled by. When the Treasurer announced that at QCOSS's annual budget breakfast, the whole room erupted into applause, so I believe that will go some way in being able to support those further enhancements.

Our investment, if you think about it, over four years is \$115.8 million. It is the largest uplift that neighbourhood centres have ever had. To my way of thinking, neighbourhood centres are really so critical in the fabric of our communities. We are seeing neighbourhood centres being utilised for much more than they used to be in the past. When they first began they were, in some instances, centres where people could drop in and be part of community activities. They are much more than that. In fact, neighbourhood centres are now being utilised in community recovery and other events that might be occurring in a community. They are professional, place-based community development outfits, and that is why that uplift in funding was so important. That is why the CPI that was announced by the Treasurer has been very well received, to be able to support exactly what it is that the member is referring to. We have been increasing funding to neighbourhood centres. What we saw from those opposite when they were in government is that neighbourhood centres were absolutely hit. We saw funding—

Mr BENNETT: Point of order, Chair: could we move on? I think the question has been answered and we only have a small block of time, so thank you.

CHAIR: Has the minister completed her answer?

Ms ENOCH: Yes, thank you.

CHAIR: Okay.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, I want to come back to your \$126,000 study tour with accommodation at the Fairmont Hotel. Could you not have intervened on your itinerary and said it is too costly to stay there during a cost-of-living crisis?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Of course, as I have said, the accommodation bookings are not made by me. They are made by the internal in-market representatives who took into account the location. What I can say is that this is quite galling given the atrocious amount of travel and expense that we have seen from those opposite. When they took their wives—

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Chair.

CHAIR: What is your point of order, member?

Dr ROWAN: My question is specific: couldn't the minister have intervened in this specific itinerary, \$126,000 during a cost-of-living crisis—

CHAIR: I do not need a speech from you, member. I think the minister was relevant in answering.

Dr ROWAN: Queenslanders deserve an answer.

CHAIR: Are you reflecting on the Chair?

Dr ROWAN: I am not, Chair. I apologise.

CHAIR: Minister?

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. As I have already said, accommodation bookings are made by somebody else. Travelling away from my family is not something that I call fun, let me tell you that much. I would rather stay with my family but the job requires you to travel. There are other members who do not have to worry about being away from their family; they just take them with them and put it on the taxpayer bill. When the members took their wives to Margaret River and when they took their wives to Luna Park, that was all on the taxpayer bill. Where was this outrage then? When the member for Surfers Paradise took his wife to Europe when he was the Leader of the Opposition—

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Chair.

CHAIR: What is your point of order?

Dr ROWAN: The point of order is that the question is specific: couldn't the minister have intervened? When did she see her itinerary? Did she see it before she left?

CHAIR: Minister?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the follow-on question. Of course, the itinerary was provided to me as I was leaving. These were booked by internal in-market representatives. That is what happens every time I travel. I do not dictate where I stay. It is up to the internal in-market representatives to book that. That is what happens. I am sure that is what happens for the member when he travels. I am not sure he goes and books his own travel.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, finally on that—

CHAIR: Member, I think the questioning is becoming pretty irrelevant. You have asked the question over and over again. I believe the minister has attempted to answer fully. Could you please, to assist the proceedings, move on to another question?

Dr ROWAN: I will move on. The Queensland art gallery contract disclosure report for the 2023-24 financial year shows that \$41,160 was spent in January and March of this year at the five-star Molino Stucky Hilton Hotel in Venice, Italy. Minister, are you aware of that expenditure?

Ms ENOCH: I certainly have some awareness of the program, but if the member wishes to seek further information on that then I happy to bring forward the CEO. I can say that 73 per cent of international travel undertaken by QAGoMA staff in 2023-24 was paid by external parties. I understand that the travel that the member is talking about was part of a broader package of work. I am happy to bring forward the CEO, if he has specific questions about that.

Dr ROWAN: Yes, can we bring forward the CEO?

CHAIR: Yes. I ask the CEO to come forward.

Mr Saines: I thank the member for the question. The travel and accommodation you refer to was in Venice at the Molino Stucky Hilton Hotel. The total cost of that travel was \$50,115.47. There were 23 people staying at the hotel. Twenty-one of them were Contemporary Patrons who paid for the visit to Venice and the experience that they had there as part of a service delivery that we provide to the foundation each year. There were two staff members, myself included and the director of philanthropy. All of the costs associated with the accommodation were fully met by payments made directly by the Contemporary Patrons. In fact, I am pleased to report that \$23,983 was gained to the benefit of the foundation as a consequence of this Contemporary Patrons travel.

Dr ROWAN: I have a further question to the minister. Given that this is contained within the contract disclosure report and, if I understand the response from Mr Saines that some of this was paid for by benefactors in relation to their attendance at Venice, should it not also be in the gifts and benefits register pertaining to the gallery if it has been donated money or is it actually a cost that has been incurred by the gallery?

Ms ENOCH: I will call on the CEO once again. Keep in mind—and the member should be aware of this—that there are a number of structures in place to provide for QAGoMA to be world class. We know that when we have world-class galleries our visitor nights increase and the economy benefits from that. I absolutely commend the work of QAGoMA and the board who do a stellar job to attract that kind of funding, support and philanthropy into our operations. It is very critical. I do not think the member is inferring this, but I do not want to take away from the huge generosity of philanthropists in this state who absolutely back the arts. Without them, we would be poorer for it. We do not want that for the industry. I am happy for the CEO to provide some further clarity for you.

Mr Saines: If I can provide further clarity: I do not believe that the funds that subsidised my stay at the hotel—which were to the tune of just under \$3,000, if I could refer to my papers here; they were just slightly under \$3,000 in total for the period that I stayed at the hotel—constitute a gift to me personally because I was there engaged to deliver a piece of work for and on behalf of QAGoMA. I was working, in other words. I was not a recipient of a gift for a holiday stay. As a consequence, I think it does not comprise something that would need to be lodged in the gifts and benefits register, given that it was work related and fully subsidised by Contemporary Patrons as part of my delivery of that tour.

Ms ENOCH: A bit like when you took your wives to Margaret River, did you declare that as a gift?

Dr ROWAN: I have a further question to the minister. To clarify, based on what Mr Saines has said, I specifically want to know, in relation to the costs to taxpayers in relation to the trip, as I understand the response, it was just \$3,000 of the \$41,160 or the other figure of \$50,000. The actual cost to taxpayers of this trip was \$3,000 and there was no other cost to the Queensland government with respect to the trip to Venice?

Ms ENOCH: That is my understanding but I am happy for the CEO to provide further clarification. Like I said earlier, with over 70 per cent of international travel paid for by external parties, the QAGoMA staff do an absolutely amazing job to get as much bang for buck as we can. I do want to acknowledge that. I am happy for them to provide extra clarity.

Mr Saines: Thank you, Minister. To add some clarification on the trip to Venice in its entirety: the full cost of that trip was \$20,072. It included \$6,425 fully supported by the Contemporary Patrons. That includes travel. It was a travel component. We based it on an economy class fare as a component of my total travel cost over to Venice. There was also local travel and food associated with that. The net cost to the gallery, in other words, or to the agency was \$13,647.

I spent nine days on the ground in Venice. The first four of those was in association with the vernissage, the opening events of the Venice Biennale. The member might be aware that Queensland artist Archie Moore and Queensland QAGoMA curator Ellie Buttrose were responsible for presenting the work in the Australian pavilion that year, which I will say went on to win the Golden Lion for best national presentation at Venice. It was important for that reason and several others beside that reason that I was present in Venice. In addition, in the days that I spent before the Contemporary Patrons tour commenced I was accommodated in an Airbnb close to the Biennale.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, if I understand correctly from Mr Saines, the cost to taxpayers was \$13,647. Is that correct?

Mr Saines: That is correct.

Dr ROWAN: I will move on. Minister, the Arts Queensland's Contract Disclosure Report for the 2024 financial year shows that over \$1.62 million was awarded in December 2023 for 'BDO Services professional services for business cases'. Can you please provide detail as to how the \$1.6 million is to be spent and on what business cases?

Ms ENOCH: Whilst I am gathering that information, just to reflect on the previous question, for clarity to the member for Moggill, as he would know, members of parliament and certainly ministers are not in the same position as staff members of QAGoMA where they can receive support from external bodies to compensate or supplement their travel expenses.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, for that clarification.

Ms ENOCH: As I said, there are some members of parliament, as we have seen in formal reports, who quite happily take their wives on trips and pay for that through the taxpayer.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Ms ENOCH: Professional services are engaged by my department for short periods for professional technical and expert support to help deliver government initiatives. The items that the member for Moggill is referring to are related to the First Nations Cultural Centre work. As I have said already, over multiple decades the establishment of a First Nations Cultural Centre in Brisbane has been part of many discussions. In fact, the Tourism and Events Queensland reports have been very clear that there needs to be a focal point with regard to First Nations cultural centres as a provision to enhance our cultural offering, particularly as we head into the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In 2023-24, all of those that are mentioned with regard to BDO were all with regard to the First Nation Cultural Centre business casework, keeping in mind that that preliminary work has been quite complex, working with multiple traditional owner groups and other First Nations interest groups as well as industry experts to map a way forward with regard to that. I would also direct the member's attention to question on notice No. 5 for this hearing that outlines at length the Brisbane and Cairns First Nations cultural centres detailed businesses cases that are currently underway.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, I want to come to the \$1.6 million live music support package. It is reported that this funding will be administered through Arts Queensland. Is this correct?

Ms ENOCH: There are multiple components to this funding. Some of this funding is within my agency. There is \$3.5 million in a live music support package from my agency: up to \$1.62 million to be held centrally for live music business support grants; \$1.6 million to support infrastructure upgrades at the Woodford Folk Festival's Woodfordia; and up to \$240,000 over two years to support the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training to create a Night Life Economy Commissioner to work alongside the Queensland Small Business Commissioner. Additionally, through Queensland Health, the government is investing nearly \$1 million to fund the delivery and evaluation of drug-checking services in Queensland. All of these things have been part of the live music support package.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, can you confirm the total cost to taxpayers of the trip to Venice?

Ms ENOCH: The trip to Venice?

Mr LANGBROEK: In relation to the questions that the shadow minister has been asking, can you confirm to the committee the total cost to taxpayers of the trip to Venice?

Ms ENOCH: I call the CEO back.

Mr Saines: I think I did speak to this point specifically. The net cost to the taxpayer was \$13,647 for the nine days that were spent in Venice, of which four were given over to the Contemporary Patrons tour and the other five were given over to meetings and other work at the Venice Biennale.

Ms ENOCH: I confirm, as I said, as with all international travel from QAGoMA, we have seen 73 per cent of those costs met by outside parties, so that is a normal and natural practice. Ministers and members of parliament do not have the same luxury of being able to tap into those buckets of funding external to us. That is where that sits.

Mr LANGBROEK: My final question is: given that they face uncertain futures, can the minister reassure the committee about the future for the Caboolture Neighbourhood Centre, Logan East Community Neighbourhood Centre and Wynnum Community Place?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. I question the premise of the question, though, with regard to uncertainty?

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, they have uncertainty as to whether they will stay there and whether they will continue to be funded or not funded at all.

Ms ENOCH: They are currently funded.

Mr LANGBROEK: One is not.

Ms ENOCH: In terms of government funded neighbourhood centres, we currently have 128 of those across the state and looking to expand.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am just asking about three.

Ms ENOCH: I will just let you know that there are a number of new centres that are being built—one of which is in Labrador. We continue to provide that support for neighbourhood centres. I am happy to have a further conversation. Caboolture and Logan East are funded by the government.

Mr LANGBROEK: But both are uncertain about whether they are going to remain in their current positions due to proposed renovations or moving them.

Ms ENOCH: I see what you are saying. There is work currently underway with regard to the pipeline of new builds. When the department has made some evaluations about where we need new neighbourhood centres or where we need to see redevelopment of new neighbourhood centres, they have a full criteria and they work through that. They work very closely with those funded neighbourhood centres with regard to all of that.

Think about Bribie Island, for instance, right now. They have seen their former building be demolished. I visited there recently to see the progress of that work. They are currently doing their business out of another property that the department has assisted them to utilise. When the build is done, they will move back in. That happens from time to time, especially when you see that the buildings in which some of these neighbourhood centres are operating are no longer fit for purpose. The department goes through criteria to make sure they have that right.

I met with neighbourhood centres—I believe the one you are referring to—in Caboolture recently to have those discussions about the next steps for them. I can assure the member that the department works very closely with government funded neighbourhood centres with regard to their future—in particular, the future of any buildings that they might be in as well.

CHAIR: You have about 1½ minutes left.

Mr LANGBROEK: In that case, Wynnum Community Place is unfunded and has been so since 31 March 2022. They are also concerned about whether they are prospectively going to get some support into the future. Could the minister provide some background about that? They have a board and they have continued to provide services worth over a million dollars to the community, but they would like some reassurance about their consideration for being funded.

CHAIR: One minute.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for that specific question. As I understand it, you might be talking about other government funding for that particular community centre, so that is with regard to some other funding, not base funding as part of funded neighbourhood centres. We remain at 128 currently

with growth occurring in that space, and of course the department continues to look for opportunities to build capacity across the state. I think the member is referring to money that is not related to base funding for neighbourhood centres at that particular location. It is pretty rich, coming from a member who saw neighbourhood centres hit by LNP cuts when they were in office.

CHAIR: In accordance with the motion of the House, I turn to the member for Maiwar for questions and I again welcome Dr MacMahon, the member for South Brisbane.

Mr BERKMAN: I will defer to the member for South Brisbane.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, what role does the department of communities play in administering funding and programs to support people in Queensland impacted by overseas conflicts, including support for refugees?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Through our neighbourhood centres we see a number of programs that are being delivered that are in tune with the needs of those communities. As I said earlier, neighbourhood centres are place-based community development experts. That is what we want to see in those neighbourhood centres. They are funded to respond to the needs of their communities. In my own community in Acacia Ridge, where there is a large, growing population of people who are residing in the area following their movement from another country, we are seeing that in some of the activities the neighbourhood centre is doing there. To the centre of your question, I believe that is more a question for the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, so I would direct her to that. My department's involvement is really through the work we do with our neighbourhood centres in particular but also through work such as the social isolation and loneliness inquiry and the subsequent funding that has been provided to bring people together. There are lots of activities occurring in that space. I think the thrust of the question might be better presented to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

Dr MacMAHON: My next question is about emergency relief, which I understand also sits between different departments but also falls under community support. Minister, do you have data on how many Queenslanders are accessing emergency relief programs and what drivers are leading people to need to access emergency relief?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. As I have said in a number of my responses to questions, emergency relief is a very important part of being able to support vulnerable Queenslanders in need. We have seen the massive, first of its kind, huge cost-of-living measures that are being put in place by this government, including \$1,000 off your energy bill, the 20 per cent reduction in car rego and soon-to-be-implemented 50-cent public transport fares. Apart from that, of course emergency relief continues to be a really important part of being able to provide support to those in need. We have moved from 86 providers to 195 providers of emergency relief that are funded from my agency, so can you see already the number of providers who are stepping into the space given the growing need that is out there.

As the member knows, it provides support to those facing immediate financial hardship. There are vouchers for food and essential items, food parcels and contributions to utility bills so people can deal with those things whilst they are dealing with the rest of what is going on for them. Sometimes I have seen emergency relief providing support for things like car rego et cetera just to help people get through those times. Given that we have gone from 86 to 195 providers, that is a true indication of the growing need out there. That is why we have seen that increase in funding in that space. In terms of the actual numbers for each of the centres or each of the providers, I do not have that to hand. The problem is that the overall data is held by multiple different organisations, not just the Queensland government. On the measure of how many providers we are funding, that measure to me is an indication of the growing need.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, I was hoping to revisit my earlier question regarding the youth empowerment hub at Coopers Plains.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the reminding me of that question. I understand that the letter the member sent was sent to both myself and the Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice at the time. The minister responded to both the member for South Brisbane and the member for Maiwar. The question itself is obviously more related to the youth justice space. In terms of the letter, I understand that the minister at the time encouraged you to support any of your constituents and services and to apply for funding from her department at the time and that all available funding, including those through QTender, was something she advised you to do. I am happy to continue doing that work. It will be interesting to see how many applications for funding have been brought forward by the organisation you are advocating on behalf of. I am happy to have those further conversations with the minister who is responsible for that.

Dr MacMAHON: I have a question regarding disaster support and recovery, which also sits across a number of departments. Minister, has your department done investigations or provided advice regarding emergency recovery specifically for people who live in apartments and advice for bodies corporate?

Ms ENOCH: Just to clarify, my department's responsibilities begin in the community recovery period. If the member is referring more to damage that might have been caused by a disaster that is a different agency. I have just been reminded that if there are matters to do with insurance that is also another agency. I believe that is the Attorney-General's area. In this last season we saw seven separate events and over 377,000 applications supported by the work of my agency. That is more than the three last seasons combined. That is not just the impacts of climate change but the fact that my agency has been adapting very swiftly to support more and more people than ever who are impacted by natural disasters.

That is a phenomenal amount of work when you consider that number of applications for support. It is absolutely phenomenal. I want to acknowledge my whole agency, all of the volunteers and the community organisations that work with us with regard to community recovery. They have done an amazing job in this last season—three times the amount.

Sorry, I have just caught the members getting their photo taken at the estimates hearing.

Mr LANGBROEK: It will be on Instagram, Minister.

Ms ENOCH: Taking their photos at an estimates hearing, okay.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr BERKMAN: I want to ask a question of the minister around the arts generally but more specifically the recent closure of The Zoo which I suppose is in some ways emblematic of a lot of the struggles that smaller and larger venues are facing at the moment. What consideration did the department give to financial support or any other assistance for The Zoo? More broadly, what consideration could be given to propping up struggling venues, given the changing landscape in the arts and music scene in Brisbane and around the state?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Obviously, during COVID, live music venues in particular were hit really hard and we provided a great deal of financial support during that time. I think, like for many people, yourself included, news of The Zoo's closure has been disappointing for many artists and audiences given it is a unique place in Brisbane's live music scene as a platform for emerging bands and musicians. We are seeing right across the arts sector a change in audience behaviour which has impacted not just live music but lots of different events right across the spectrum of the arts.

We have consistently backed live music in Queensland, including, as I said, through the impacts of COVID, where we invested more than \$16.5 million into Queensland's music industry through a range of funding programs and initiatives and over \$8.9 million to support live music venues in particular in addition to the new funding in this year's budget. The Zoo accessed more than \$300,000 of this funding through Arts Queensland and Arts Queensland's live music support. We had programs called Play Local and Live Music Support Program. They had been able to access that. As I said, we are seeing increasingly quite dramatic changes in audience behaviour and some of the business models struggling to keep pace with the change in audience behaviour. That is why this live music fund that has been announced now is really critical to be able to support the live music sector to adjust to those changes in audience behaviour.

Mr BERKMAN: Given those changes in patronage and audience behaviour, has any consideration been given to the possibility of the state actually buying up certain venues so that we maintain those hubs to foster and support live music and up-and-coming bands in and around the state?

Ms ENOCH: Obviously we are a massive supporter of arts infrastructure in this state. We have a new performing arts venue that is currently being built. We have medium-sized venues such as the Judith Wright centre in the Valley, for instance, that provides audience space and performance space. In terms of being able to buy out privately owned companies or businesses, that is not really something that the Queensland government would be interested in. That is a matter for a private business, but we have been supporting them through these incentives, particularly through COVID, with a massive injection of funding to support that private industry.

They are all part of the sector, as you can imagine. We continue to find ways to support them, even through our innovation grants, which is a new package of funding to diversify business. We are trying to support them in those ways to do that. Like I said, we have infrastructure that we have

supported on a bigger scale through NPAV. We have partnered with local councils in Rockhampton and Cairns, for instance, to deliver their big infrastructure pieces for the arts. We have the Judith Wright centre and we have got Bulmba-ja in Cairns that we have been able to fund. We are looking at that infrastructure to support the arts sector that belongs to the government, and we are supporting through these incentives for private businesses as well.

CHAIR: Thank you. We now go to government questions.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 4 of the SDS, can you provide an update on responses to the parliamentary inquiry into social isolation and loneliness?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for this important question. I want to acknowledge this committee which led some of this work around the inquiry. In particular, I acknowledge the former chair of this committee who personally took up a lot of leadership in this space.

We recognise that the impacts of loneliness and social isolation can affect not only individual health but also the wellbeing of the broader community. That is why our government initiated a parliamentary inquiry into social isolation and loneliness. The final report for this inquiry was handed down in 2022. Since then we have made significant progress in delivering on our commitment to respond to all 14 recommendations from the inquiry. This includes the release of Communities 2032. I am very proud of this. It is our 10-year vision for preventing and responding to social isolation and loneliness by building communities where every person is supported and empowered to connect, participate, contribute and thrive.

Recognising that Queenslanders themselves know what is best for their communities, we have also delivered the \$4 million Communities Innovation Fund to facilitate innovative community-led projects and initiatives that foster connection and inclusion. Through the first round of grants, awarded last year, this fund is already supporting a range of initiatives from Cape York to the south-east corner, including projects designed by and delivered for First Nations communities.

This is a government that proudly recognises and celebrates diversity in all its forms. This means acknowledging inequities where they exist and responding with investment that empowers our diverse communities to thrive. The parliamentary inquiry highlighted that culturally and linguistically diverse people, including migrants and refugees, people seeking asylum and Australian South Sea islander people, have unique experiences which place them at increased risk of social isolation and loneliness. We also know that our multicultural communities are resilient, dedicated to helping one another and strengthened by deep cultural wisdom.

This year, the second round of the Communities Innovation Fund is enabling that wisdom to flourish through a specific focus on funding innovative projects and initiatives which respond to social isolation and loneliness in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. I am pleased to announce that Mareeba Shire Council, North Queensland Ummah Care, You Belong Australia, Ethni Inc and the Queensland Council for LGBTI Health will share in over \$235,000 of funding, bringing to life their innovative ideas for promoting community connection and wellbeing—from football on the Tablelands to floristry in Logan. I am very proud to be supporting these initiatives and to be furthering this government's commitment to fostering vibrant, inclusive and connected Queensland communities.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 4 of the SDS, could you provide an update on new and redeveloped state funded neighbourhood centres in Queensland?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for this question. It speaks to some of the questions from the opposition, so they may like to take this on board also. Neighbourhood centres, as I have said, are inclusive and welcoming of everybody, which is why their role is particularly important as we strive to address issues such as social isolation and loneliness and implement the initiatives to support community recovery as part of the Communities 2032 Strategy.

As I have said already, this government funds 128 neighbourhood centres across the state and is committed to supporting the delivery of this critical social infrastructure. We are continuing to work in partnership with the neighbourhood centres sector to build and strengthen the network of centres operating across the state. This work is underpinned by *Neighbourhood centres: our shared vision for a vibrant neighbourhood centre system in Queensland*, which I had the pleasure of releasing in December last year. This shared vision is supporting this whole-of-government approach to investing in neighbourhood centres, building a bridge between the government's policy objectives to improve local community outcomes and the sector's history of achievement and demonstrated strengths and capability.

This was all part of repositioning our neighbourhood centres to be, as I have said, in my mind, the absolute leaders in place-based community development. That is what we want in our neighbourhood centres. We want to be able to increase their ability to deliver that quality service for Queenslanders, which is why we saw a very significant funding boost of \$115.8 million over four years. That funding has enabled centres to deliver additional services, to be open to their communities for increased hours and to employ more people in the community services workforce.

As part of our government's commitment to building stronger supported communities, new neighbourhood centres, as I have already said—I am very proud to be able to say this again—will be built in Agnes Water, Kowanyama, Palm Island, Ripley and Labrador, and existing centres in Emerald and Manoora will be replaced. This is delivered through an investment of \$21.8 million in this year's budget. I am also very pleased to be able to say that the new building in Rockhampton is underway. This will see the first neighbourhood centre in Rockhampton completed, I have been told, next year.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 4 of the SDS, can you update the committee on the work of the Miles government in supporting our young Queenslanders?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Nicklin. As we know, young people form a huge part of our communities. In Queensland, young people aged 12 to 25 years represent one in five of our population. Of First Nations Queenslanders, half are under 25, with one in four aged between 12 and 25.

The journey from childhood to adulthood is unique and transformative for every young person and does not start with the same opportunities. That is why we are taking meaningful steps to support young people and help them embrace their futures with confidence. As I have already mentioned to the committee, I am proud to announce that the Queensland government today released the Young Queenslanders Strategy, which provides a framework for government to meet young people aged 12 to 25 where they are and empower them to achieve their potential with confidence as they move forward through life. We want young people to feel empowered so they can participate in society, live their best lives and thrive in our communities.

There is a critical need to empower emerging adults with the skills and confidence that will propel them towards becoming the next generation of leaders. Through this year's state budget we are delivering \$302,000 for the continued delivery of the Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program. We are also seeing, in terms of the ongoing support for the delivery of the Queensland Youth Parliament, an investment of \$85,000 allocated over the 2024-25 financial year. I know that there are many people on both sides of politics who have been through the Queensland Youth Parliament, so we do see a lot of fantastic outcomes from the young people who are engaged in that.

Right now, young people are getting quite a lot of attention and a lot of negative attention. A huge number of young people—in fact, some 2,000—had their say on the youth strategy. There were multiple consultation events where young people came and spoke very articulately and eloquently about their visions for the future. I can say to every member of this committee that our future is in very good hands. We have some outstanding young people who every day are standing up for the rights of many others.

CHAIR: Minister, with reference to page 6 of the SDS, can you update the committee on how the Miles government's investment in the screen industry is delivering economic outcomes for Queensland? You have about a minute and a half.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. In 2023-24 we invested \$51.9 million into the state's screen industry. This investment has supported some 74 productions, generating an estimated 5,300 employment opportunities and more than \$452 million in Queensland production expenditure. For 2023-24 we have progressed two screen related election commitments: the new film studio in Cairns and our \$5 million capital grants program to screen businesses on the Gold Coast. The \$12.6 million studio has expanded the state's network of critical screen infrastructure to Far North Queensland. The capital grant program on the Gold Coast sees funding of up to \$750,000 to establish new premises. The list goes on.

The screen industry is absolutely thriving in Queensland. I refer to the huge success of *Boy Swallows Universe* and the success of *Bluey*. The infrastructure that we have been able to support through our government absolutely sets us up for the further growth of screen in our state. We want to be a destination for productions from all over the globe and now we have the infrastructure to do that. Of course, massive talent already exists in Queensland to absolutely catapult the screen industry into the world.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We have now reached the end of the time allocated for the consideration of the proposed expenditure for the areas of responsibility administered by the Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and

Minister for the Arts. My understanding is that there have been no questions taken on notice. That is correct. I would like to thank the minister, officials and departmental officers for their attendance. Minister, briefly, would you like to thank your department staff and obviously others?

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair and committee members, for your time today. Thank you to Hansard and other parliamentary staff supporting the committee. I also acknowledge my director-general, deputy directors-general and staff from the department and my office for their hard work in preparation to be able to present to the committee. I also thank the representatives of the arts statutory bodies that are here as well as the Family Responsibilities Commissioner and the Meriba Omasker Kazip Kazipa Commissioner for making themselves available. It has been an absolute pleasure to speak on the many achievements of my department and, of course, of the Miles government's future plans for Queensland.

CHAIR: The committee will now adjourn until 1 pm, when we will examine the estimates for the portfolio areas of child safety, seniors, disability services and multicultural affairs.

Proceedings suspended from 12.17 pm to 1.00 pm.


**ESTIMATES—COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE—CHILD
SAFETY; SENIORS AND DISABILITY SERVICES; MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS****In Attendance**

Hon. C Mullen, Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Ms J Heywood, Chief of Staff

Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services

Ms D Mulkerin, Director-General

 **CHAIR:** Good afternoon. We will now resume proceedings. For the benefit of those who have just joined us, I am Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay and chair of the committee. The other members of the committee are: Mr Stephen Bennett, the member for Burnett and deputy chair; Mr Michael Berkman, the member for Maiwar; Dr Mark Robinson, the member for Oodgeroo; Ms Cynthia Lui, the member for Cook; and Mr Rob Skelton, the member for Nicklin. I also welcome Ms Amanda Camm, the member for Whitsunday. The committee is joined by other members who have been granted leave to attend and ask questions at the hearing today.

I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at the chair's discretion or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasters of proceedings are available from the secretariat. Staff who are assisting our witnesses here today are permitted to use personal electronic devices in the chamber. I ask all present to ensure phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode or turned off if not in use. I also remind everyone that food and drink is not permitted in this chamber.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2024 for the portfolio area of child safety until 2.15 pm. We will then adjourn for a short break until 2.30 pm before examining the portfolio area of seniors and disability services until 3.45 pm, followed by examining the portfolio area of multicultural affairs until 4.15 pm. I remind honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can only be raised during the times specified for the area, as was agreed by the House. I refer members to the program set by the House available through the chamber and on the committee's webpage.

I also remind everyone that these proceedings are subject to the standing orders and rules of the Legislative Assembly. In respect of government owned corporations and statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent, or appropriate public guarantees are being provided.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the director-general, officials from departments and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or director-general.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of child safety 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.

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you, Chair. May I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners on whose lands we meet today and pay my respects to elders past and present. It is an honour to appear before the committee today, my first estimates as Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. When I became the minister, I said that how we look after the most vulnerable in our community speaks to the Queensland we want to be. In the past seven months, I have had the opportunity to see the very best in our state. However, I also acknowledge the complexities of many Queenslanders' situations—they are at times heartbreaking, but I assure the committee they are not insurmountable.

Since becoming the minister, I have made it a priority to visit our frontline Child Safety teams to better understand their work and their workloads, the decisions they make, their challenges and their successes. I have now visited 27 child safety service centres across the state since January and have found every conversation helpful, hopeful and instructive in the decisions I need to make as the minister. I have had the privilege of working with our teams focused on our seniors, multicultural communities and on Queenslanders with a disability, witnessing their dedication to addressing critical issues and major reforms. I have spent time with our delightful seniors who are being supported to connect, access services and overcome loneliness and isolation through the many organised gatherings and activities that are being funded through our government. I also get the best critiques of the scones or cakes—every time.

I have spoken with wonderful people across the state who invest their time and their hearts into creating inclusive communities and, after 41 amazing multicultural events, festivals and feasts and 35 site visits and meetings with our multicultural communities and stakeholders, I continue to believe that multiculturalism is and will always be our state's greatest strength.

But we also know that many Queenslanders are doing it tough. They include young people, seniors, foster and kinship and other carers, people with disability and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We will keep investing in services and other support measures for those who need it most.

Our 2024-25 state budget focuses on helping Queenslanders. Across my portfolio we are investing \$2.3 billion in child and family services, \$3.7 billion in seniors and disability services, and \$21 million in multicultural affairs. We are working with disability advocates to inform national ministerial meetings and decisions to ensure we get the best outcomes for Queenslanders with disability, particularly in relation to NDIS reforms.

Today I am proud to announce Queensland's response to the disability royal commission recommendations. Key reforms include working with other state and territories around complaint processes, increasing school participation, expanding the housing reform agenda and achieving better outcomes for First Nations people with disability. We are investing in our disability sector, allocating an extra \$160 million for better services and supports across the state. This is just our initial funding response to the recommendations of the DRC and NDIS reviews.

We increased funding under the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland program to \$3 million for 154 events and projects to celebrate our cultural diversity and strengthen community cohesion. In this year's budget, we have expanded support for asylum seekers and community events and projects which promote a sense of welcoming and belonging.

We will continue to drive change in the child protection system through the Roadmap for Residential Care in Queensland. We are listening to the voices of young people in care by expanding the My Life in Care Survey participant age and established the SHIFT—Ministerial Youth Advisory Network.

We value our foster and kinship carers—all 6,177—and we have recruitment and retention campaigns to boost numbers and strengthen financial support for those carers. Our government also values and respects the important role of child safety officers and we are boosting their pay. As a result, we have seen a 130 per cent increase in applications in the first six months of this year compared to the previous year. The number of child safety officers has increased to 1,403 full-time equivalent positions as at the end of June 2024, an increase of 518 positions since 2015.

The department has also increased the proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with kin and we are listening to kin carers who have told us blue card is a barrier to care, especially for our First Nations families. The number of children entering the child protection system remains relatively steady in these challenging times. The same can be said for the very small percentage of children who cross over both the child protection and youth justice systems.

We are responding to the concerns of vulnerable families, seniors, Queenslanders with disability and our multicultural communities. All Queenslanders deserve to be heard, to be supported to enjoy a life of opportunity and possibility, and that is exactly what our Miles Labor government is doing through the work of this important department.

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

Mr BENNETT: Thank you, Chair. I will pass over to the shadow minister.

Ms CAMM: Thank you, Chair and committee. Good afternoon. Minister, how many residential care facilities have you visited?

Mrs MULLEN: I have had the opportunity to spend time in a number of residential care facilities, a mix of them, so I would say—

Ms CAMM: How many?

Mrs MULLEN: Two that I have visited, yes.

Ms CAMM: When was the first time that you visited your first facility?

Mrs MULLEN: I would have to check, but I understand that I visited one—I would have to come back to you on that question, actually.

Ms CAMM: Will you take that on notice?

Mrs MULLEN: I will answer that before the end of hearing for you.

Ms CAMM: Thank you. Minister, of those two, what locations in our state were they?

Mrs MULLEN: I would rather not disclose the locations specifically, but—

Ms CAMM: Region?

Mrs MULLEN: Yes, I am happy to provide you that. One was in South-East Queensland and the other one was—I want to say Mackay—I will have to come back to you with the second one.

Ms CAMM: You will take that on notice as well?

Mrs MULLEN: I will respond to you before the end of the hearing.

Ms CAMM: The QFCC commissioner stated that ‘we continue to place children and young people into houses we would not choose for our own children’; do you accept this is the standard for children in our state and do you agree with the commissioner’s statements?

Mrs MULLEN: I believe that residential care remains an important and necessary part of our child safety placement mix, but I acknowledge that it is overutilised. I have had the opportunity to speak to a number of the organisations that run our residential care facilities. I believe that they are responding to some of the concerns that have been expressed around some of those residential care homes. Certainly the residential care facilities that I visited had a very homely feel to them. I had the opportunity to meet with some of the residential care staff and to speak about some of the daily routines of some of those young people. Obviously, those young people were not there at the time. I believe that there is always the opportunity for greater improvement when it comes to residential care.

Ms CAMM: Minister, did you see any cots in the two facilities that you visited?

Mrs MULLEN: In one of the facilities there was one cot; however, no child that was utilising the cot at the time.

Ms CAMM: You did mention that you did not meet any children in that visit; is that correct?

Mrs MULLEN: That is right.

Ms CAMM: Minister, how many children under six months have stayed in a residential care facility in the last 12 months, and what was their longest stay?

Mrs MULLEN: I will ask the director-general to confirm that number for you.

Ms Mulkerin: We will have to seek the specific number of children under six months. We will endeavour to get it to you, with the minister’s agreement.

Ms CAMM: Minister, you may want to defer this: is the data kept on what proportion of young people in residential care who are aged between 14 and 18 have a part-time or full-time job?

Mrs MULLEN: I will ask the director-general to speak to that.

Ms Mulkerin: That number would not be available through our corporate data. It would be held on each young person’s individual file so we would not be able to report that through the corporate data.

Ms CAMM: Minister, I am interested to understand the school attendance rates of young people who are in residential care; is data recorded?

Mrs MULLEN: Obviously we encourage and we want children in residential care to be attending school at every opportunity, recognising of course that young people sometimes face complexities that mean attending school on a daily basis may be difficult. We have a lot of young people in residential care who come from trauma backgrounds who obviously have mental health concerns.

Ms CAMM: I understand the complexities; it is more about whether the data is kept?

CHAIR: The minister is answering.

Mrs MULLEN: I wanted to preface it by saying that obviously we would like to see children and young people attending school, where it is possible. It sometimes is not possible but I will ask the director-general to see if we retain that data.

Ms Mulkerin: What I can say is that about 25 per cent of the whole cohort of children in out-of-home care have experienced, or are experiencing, either some disruption to schooling, suspensions or being expelled, so that is the whole cohort of children in care.

Ms CAMM: Can you confirm how many children in the cohort would reach a threshold of 90 per cent attendance, for example; is that data kept?

Ms Mulkerin: I am not sure whether we would have that data. We have an MOU with Education about the exchange of information. We can endeavour to see if we have that level of detail.

Ms CAMM: Minister, what is the highest number of placements for a child in residential care in the last 12 months?

Mrs MULLEN: As you would appreciate, we have children with some very complex needs. The director-general would have that figure, I believe.

Ms Mulkerin: I do not have that number with me, but the point that you are making is that the children and young people—particularly the older young people in residential care you referenced—have a very complex set of needs. There are a combination of issues that have been driving the numbers particularly of older young people in residential care. There has been an overall growth in the demand for child protection services. The second is that during COVID we saw a seven per cent increase in the number of children and young people coming into care. The growth of children and young people coming into care prior to COVID had been running at around two per cent. Of that cohort—some of the most complex young people we care for—there was a growth in older young people coming into care. This was against 30 to 40 years of trends in child protection of predominantly younger children coming into care. Of the cohort of older young people, there is a particular cohort who have very serious mental health issues and cognitive impairments.

Ms CAMM: I might reframe the question. Minister, it has been reported to me through non-government organisation partners that there are up to 39 placements for one child. Do you see that as acceptable?

Mrs MULLEN: Obviously we cannot speak to those individual matters but, as the director-general has indicated, we are seeing is older children with much greater complexities and sometimes with significant disabilities who are coming into our residential care system. We acknowledge it is a challenge when placements break down. It is a challenge for our department to manage those placements, but we will always do our very best to find care for those young people despite those challenges, because we recognise that every child needs a safe home and we will continue to find a placement for those children. Yes, we do sometimes have very high placement numbers but there are specific circumstances relating to individual children that warrant those kind of placements.

Ms CAMM: A question for the minister. How many children in residential care have been reported missing in the last 12 months?

Mrs MULLEN: Again, I defer to the director-general. We find that sometimes children will leave a placement. There is a process in place between the department and the providers around what that looks like. That sometimes involves the Queensland Police Service as well.

Ms CAMM: That data is kept by the department then?

Mrs MULLEN: As I have indicated, there is a process around how we manage children who leave a placement for a period of time, or may return a few hours later, but I will check with the director-general whether we maintain actual corporate data on that, or whether that is manual data that is not currently held.

Ms Mulkerin: That is manual data that is kept locally. The minister is correct, young people can often be kept out of their placement and are maybe 'just down the shops with their friends' right through to 'actually missing'. If they are missing then, yes, there is a process where we will report to police but often workers, particularly for young people in residential care, have a relationship with those young people and they will seek them out where they think that they might be and encourage them to come back again.

Ms CAMM: As a mother, I know if my children go missing I am trying to ascertain their whereabouts. As the state is the guardian of children, do you record data about when a child goes missing? I have heard that is paper based at a local level.

Ms Mulkerin: Yes, correct; that information is held locally on the child's file.

Ms CAMM: As a state, though, we do not know how many children are reported missing each year under the care of child safety; it is not corporate data that you monitor.

Mrs MULLEN: As the director-general pointed out, sometimes they may be missing for a matter of an hour, half an hour or a bit longer but, of course, as I said, we have processes in place where our department will work with the Queensland police and with those providers to ensure where possible the child is returned to that placement or if that placement breaks down then, of course, we arrange an alternative placement. We find that sometimes that some of our older young people will self-place. They will sometimes even self-place back with their families. Again, the department works with those individual families and children to ensure those children are safe at all times.

Ms CAMM: I have another question to the minister. In relation to the road map there are now 1,955 young people in residential care, up from 1,759 last year when the residential care review was launched. The former minister said they would be starting reform from day one. How is it that we have seen an 11 per cent increase in one year?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. Whilst most children are cared for in family-based care, there will always be a need for residential care for some young people. I acknowledge that there are too many children currently in residential care, and you are correct; that figure of 1,955 is the latest figure as of March 2024. It is also why we determined in July last year to instigate a review into residential care. As the director-general pointed out, through COVID we did see older children with more complexities coming into the system and that has led to a significant increase in the number of young people in residential care.

With the support and oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission and Luke Twyford we, of course, commenced that review into residential care. In February this year I was pleased to release the five-year road map for residential care. That review looked at how we identify opportunities to reduce the number of children and young people placed in residential care, where possible, by keeping them with family or in family-based care where possible. I am pleased to say we are well into the implementation of the five-year road map.

Ms CAMM: If you are well into it, why has there been an 11 per cent increase in one year?

Mrs MULLEN: Obviously that report was released on 6 February 2024 and we are now in July 2024.

Ms CAMM: The previous minister did say reform would start from day one.

CHAIR: Through the chair, member.

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you, Chair. I am happy to respond to that. It will take time for these reforms to begin to work. I can say to you that since February and since we began implementing our year 1 actions there have already been some really positive outcomes in terms of some of the things that we are doing. For example, we have now reviewed every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child in residential care and from that we have been able to create alternative placement options for some of those children so they are no longer sitting in residential care. We are trialling some new models of residential care that we think will be more therapeutic and supportive in the hope that we can, of course, bring children back to families where it is safe to do so. We always said that in terms of the residential care road map. One of the key things that I read was that residential care should be a road back to family where possible. That is some of the work that we are doing as well.

I appreciate that the numbers will and have grown; demand is growing because we are seeing more and more complex family situations. As the director-general indicated, older children are presenting to us, sometimes being relinquished by families due to some of those behavioural or disability issues that might be affecting that particular child. We are very committed and we do have a very ambitious target to halve the number of children in residential care within the five years. That is a target that we will continue to work to. As I said, we are doing some really positive things in this space.

Ms CAMM: I have a subsequent question in regards to the review. Minister, this time last year a media statement said that the residential review that was announced was to focus in particular on children under the age of 12. Given that number has increased 85 per cent in the past five years, we now see the number of children under the age of 12 at the highest it has ever been of any jurisdiction in the nation. As a mother, and I am sure that you would agree—

CHAIR: Member, can you get to the point of the question?

Ms CAMM:—I am horrified by that number.

CHAIR: Member—

Ms CAMM: I am about to ask the question, Chair.

CHAIR: Member, please get to the point of your question.

Ms CAMM: How is this road map addressing that large cohort when I have reviewed it myself and there is nothing in there that refers to children under the age of 12?

Mrs MULLEN: I would like to defer to the director-general who would be happy to answer that.

Ms Mulkerin: In relation to children under 12 there are a number of initiatives in the road map that specifically focus on under 12s. As the minister has already referenced, the review of First Nations children and young people has had a specific focus on those young people under 12 working with our partners in the community sector to activate other community supports and other family options for those young people. Of course, the alternative placement options for particularly younger children is family-based care and so in the—

Ms CAMM: We have 613 children—through the chair to the director-general—currently in care in that lower cohort. It is the largest number.

CHAIR: Member, that is a statement. Can you please let the director-general answer—

Ms CAMM: So my question to the director-general is: can you point—

CHAIR: Member, order. I do not think the director-general finished her answer before you cut across her. Please let her finish her answer.

Ms Mulkerin: Thank you, Chair. The road to having fewer children under 12 in residential care requires two or three key things. First, we have to keep working hard to find family-based care options for those children, either foster carers or kinship carers. The member would be aware that we have been working hard over the last couple of years to increase the number of kin carers for children in care. Traditionally, Queensland has had a very low base of kin carers and has almost exclusively relied upon foster carers. We really had to pick up the pace to lift the number of kin carers so that we could grow the overall numbers of family-based carers. As the minister referenced earlier, we have been successful in lifting the number of kin carers in particular and holding our number of foster carers.

The second key initiative is about options that address the care needs of those younger children, for example, sibling groups. A total of 43 per cent of children in residential care are placed with one of their siblings. We prioritise sibling placements and so trialling different models of care for sibling groups is part of the work that we have been doing as well as looking at reunification models. There is a whole range of initiatives. I appreciate that there is nowhere in the road map that specifically says, 'These things relate to children under 12,' but they are across the board.

Ms CAMM: So, Chair—

CHAIR: The time for the opposition questions at this point has expired.

Ms CAMM: The director-general just answered the question; there is nothing specific—

CHAIR: She is completing the answer. Go ahead.

Ms Mulkerin: There are a whole range of initiatives within the road map that specifically address the care needs of children under 12, but I appreciate your comment that there is no headline under which we have categorised the specific initiatives throughout the whole road map.

CHAIR: I will now call the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: My question is to the minister. With reference to page 1 of the SDS is the minister able to provide an update on the implementation of the five-year residential care road map?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. This gives me an opportunity to provide a little bit more context of what we are doing in terms of the residential care review. As I have acknowledged, we know there are too many children in residential care and it is unacceptable that Queensland has a larger proportion of children in residential care than any other state or territory. We also know that while most children are cared for in family-based care there will always be a need for residential care for some young people. That is why we are determined to improve it. In 2023 my department, with the support and oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission's Principal Commissioner Mr Luke Twyford, commenced that review into residential care, recognising that those numbers were growing. The review aimed to identify opportunities, as the director-general said, to reduce the number of children and young people in residential care by keeping them with family or in family-based care wherever possible.

That review consulted with more than 800 stakeholders and 51 written submissions were received at the time and in February I released the five-year road map for residential care. It was really important for us, too, that the road map was designed in partnership with the sector. It recognised the need to test and trial new models of residential care in order to respond to the individual needs of

children and young people in care. Importantly, the review heard directly from children and young people with lived experience in care and this allowed child focused actions to be developed. It highlighted the need for a stronger focus on early intervention, which is one of my key priorities as child safety minister. It looked at how we, as the director-general also pointed out, increase foster and kinship carers, because we know that, particularly for those younger children, that is a better level of care than having them in residential care where we can find family-based options for them. We also know that there is an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, so we need to provide that child-centric, culturally safe approach to those young people and also to children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

I am pleased to say that implementation of the five-year road map is well underway and our year 1 actions have included funding for Queensland foster and kinship care of \$1.4 million that will support the recruitment and retention of those foster and kinship carers that we are so keen to have. We have also provided \$3.3 million to PeakCare, which are leading a residential care workforce strategy. They are also expanding the Hope and Healing training opportunities as well as hosting a sector-led forum, again looking at best practice where possible. We are establishing some models of care such as short stay and sibling models of care to trial new ways of working, again recognising that we will always need some form of residential care while seeing what we can do to make it the best form of care possible. We are funding some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander models of care as well because we think that is important, with a strong focus on how we keep families together and connected, including through the reunification process. As I have also indicated, every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child in residential care has been reviewed. This review is informing what we call the What Will it Take project. Again, we are starting to see some really good results in terms of that. We also established what we call the Ready Response pilot which increases family-based care as a first placement option.

I have also created a ministerial youth advisory network of young people with lived experience in residential care. I was able to meet with our newly established group of young people on 15 July. I just want to share with you that I heard from a young person called Nell, who had lived in residential care. Nell told me that it was important to be able to tell her story to the people who would influence any changes to residential care. I was actually blown away by these young people because they have provided us with some incredible insights in terms of things that we can do to improve residential care in Queensland and with some really simple solutions as well that my department is already actioning because we can see the benefit of them, but we need to hear from those young people in residential care who are providing us with those incredible insights. We will continue to work with those young people and listen to all young people in terms of future models of care, particularly in residential care. I think what is important is that we continue to work with them but also with all of our stakeholders on how we can continue to improve residential care while reducing our over-reliance on it.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the SDS, could you provide an update on the rollout of extended postcare support in Queensland, including indexation arrangements and projected take-up in the 2024-25 financial year?

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you for the question, member. We are now one year into the implementation of the Miles government's Extended Post Care Support program. I have to tell you that this is an extraordinary program and I am so proud of our government for the work that we have been able to do in this space. Our young people leaving care across Queensland—so when they turn 18—are now able to access \$16,000 in support during what is a critical time in their young lives. Those who are not yet ready to live independently have also been able to stay with their foster and kinship carers because they will also be receiving a fortnightly caring allowance which has been extended to them for as long as they remain with their carers until they turn 21. As I said, this is a life-changing reform for many young people leaving care and it really reflects what Home Stretch and our Create Young Consultants were calling for. This funding has been used for things such as housing costs, maintaining connections with family, accessing training courses and in some cases even buying vehicles for young people leaving care. As at 30 June 2024, 594 young adults out of a predicted year 1 cohort of 597 have accessed this support. This is a really great start, but we know there is still more work to do to ensure that all young people who are leaving care have access to the EPCS program. In the second year it is estimated that around 1,658 young people will be eligible to access these enhanced supports.

I am really pleased to say that in the 2024-25 Queensland budget the Miles government has allocated \$31.33 million for 18 Extended Post Care Support services as well as direct support payments and that carer allowance that I mentioned earlier. Those 18 services cover the breadth of Queensland and are delivered by our NGOs, many of which I have met, and they share our passion for supporting young people through this financial support, mentoring and casework services. We took some time to

consult on this and our six-month consultation process with young people and key stakeholders informed the design of the program and really reflects the views, ideas and lived experiences of those young people. Some of our program providers have reported higher participation rates in the program than we anticipated and I understand that some of our young people have also required more intensive case support. While the Extended Post Care Support program is still in the early implementation phase, my department is working closely with providers to track demand, assess eligibility and review data so that we can respond nimbly to emerging issues and predict any future demands on that program.

In response to calls from services delivering the program, a community of practice has also been established for providers focusing on practice and professional development. I was pleased that on 24 April I attended a second implementation forum that was held in Brisbane with providers as we continued to respond to those issues as they arose, identify best practice and share some really positive outcomes for our young people. Importantly, I want to make it clear to the committee that young adults who turn 18 before we introduced this—so before 1 July 2023—have not been left behind. There are still a number of programs in place which provide assistance to young people leaving care so that they can access suitable and stable living arrangements, develop life skills, increase their independence and participate in their community, and that includes programs like the Queensland government's new Youth Housing Essentials as well as existing services such as Next Step Plus, Transition and Post Care Support services and the Youth Housing and Reintegration Services. They can also use the Create Foundation's Go Your Own Way kits which include resources information about transitioning from care. Investment in postcare support has more than a financial impact; it is an investment that will support these young adults to build a brighter and stable future and I am really proud that we have been able to do it as part of the Miles Labor government.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I now call for opposition questions.

Ms CAMM: Thank you, Chair. Minister, we note from the department's data on the website that under-10s in residential care have increased from 283 last year to 358 and you referenced in your opening statement the My Life in Care engagement and consultation. Minister, it has been reported to me by a non-government organisation that there are two children—siblings—in residential care aged five and six in Townsville who are not attending school. How is a child of that age able to engage in a My Life in Care or how are their needs considered when their basic need to be able to attend a school is not being met by the department at the moment?

Mrs MULLEN: I am not going to speak to any specific matters because I do not have the details of those in front of me, member for Whitsunday. If they are matters that you would like to raise with me, I would be happy to look into those particular individual matters for those children.

Ms CAMM: It is unfortunate that I do have to raise those matters, Minister.

Mrs MULLEN: I would say that we have had a really great response to our My Life in Care survey—this last one.

Ms CAMM: So you are surveying children under 10?

Mrs MULLEN: We are surveying children under 10, yes.

Ms CAMM: Five and six.

Mrs MULLEN: Five to nine is an expanded cohort of young people that we are actually surveying now.

Ms CAMM: Minister, do you ask them if they want to go to school?

Mrs MULLEN: The questions asked in the survey are available and you can see the results on the My Life in Care survey. We had almost 1,000 children and young people respond to the survey. That is almost double the number of young people compared to last year's survey, which was the inaugural survey. As I have indicated, for the first time children aged five to nine years and also those needing literacy supports, to be clear, could also participate.

Ms CAMM: They would need to go to school, I would assume, Minister.

CHAIR: Order! Member, can you allow the minister to complete her answer?

Mrs MULLEN: What I want to share with the committee is that there were some findings, and these are the sorts of questions that we do ask: 96 per cent of children say they have someone in their life they trust; 87 per cent of children say they feel loved and cared for; 83 per cent of children say the family or people they are living with are important and special to them; 89 per cent of children aged 10 to 18 years and 85 per cent of those aged five to nine feel safe and secure; 89 per cent say they have the things they need to live comfortably; and 72 per cent feel included in decisions about their lives.

Of course, we also recognise that there are things that are not working as well so we use this survey as a way to understand some of those issues. Things like social media safety was raised as a concern and things like young people feeling unsafe online and bullying, which was also an issue that was raised with 29 per cent saying they are experiencing it at school.

Ms CAMM: Point of order, Chair. My question was quite specific about ages five and six. I note that the minister answered—

Mrs MULLEN: Yes, and I have answered that question.

CHAIR: I take your point of order. I think that the minister was relevant to your question. Have you completed your answer, Minister?

Mrs MULLEN: I have.

Ms CAMM: I have another question to the minister. Minister, are you aware of a senior manager in the department who is currently under investigations for allegations of sexual harassment?

Mrs MULLEN: If there are allegations that have been made, I would encourage you to report those to the relevant body. I will defer to my director-general in relation to that. Obviously within our department we seek the highest standards of our officers. There are processes for reporting and for investigation of those matters. I would encourage you, if you are aware of any allegations that have been made or any—

Ms CAMM: Chair, I was asking the minister whether the minister was aware of the allegations.

Mrs MULLEN: I am not aware of any specific allegations made around any officer. I will ask the director-general to see if she is aware of any of that.

Ms CAMM: Thank you, Chair. To the director-general, the same question.

Ms Mulkerin: I am not sure which matter you are actually referring to. With a department the size of ours, with 5½ thousand staff, there are always matters underway in relation to misconduct that are managed through our professional standards units and then, if necessary, referred to the CCC.

Ms CAMM: I have a question to the minister. Minister, last year it was confirmed in estimates the case loads for CSOs was being averaged over funded positions rather than actual people in the roles. There are currently vacancy rates of up to 59.08 per cent for some regions across the state. Is the department still averaging case loads using this method?

Mrs MULLEN: We recognise that demand for child protection services continues to grow. Since 2015, our government has made a record investment in child safety reforms and that includes more than \$1.4 billion in new funding and 518 new child safety officers to 30 June 2025. This financial year alone, we will have 65 new funded positions within child safety.

Like other frontline agencies though, we have had child safety facing challenges with workforce and vacancy rates. That is reflected in some particular regions where that is more difficult than other areas, particularly some of our regional areas. I will ask the director-general in a minute to speak to the numbers in terms of case load numbers. As I said earlier in my statement, I have now visited 27 child safety offices across Queensland. I have visited them and they are across Queensland from the Gold Coast through to South-East Queensland, up to Mount Isa and the cape team as well. I do talk to those child safety staff about workloads. I ask them to talk to me about their workloads. In the offices where there are higher vacancy rates, of course, we see higher case load numbers. The average case load number is 15.4, is my understanding. That is a reduction compared to the highest number under an LNP government, which was 21 at the time.

Ms CAMM: Chair, point of order. My question to the minister, whether or not she would like to defer to the director-general, is specifically about the way in which that is calculated, which is the average case load calculated over the number of positions, whether they are full or not full.

Mrs MULLEN: I am happy to ask the director-general to respond to that.

Ms Mulkerin: Yes, you are right: the case load published data is the number of ongoing intervention cases, so just that specific slice of the work, against funded child safety officers. That is our EB agreement about how we will calculate the case loads. Of course, that is not the same as workload.

Ms CAMM: I recognise that.

Ms Mulkerin: As the minister has indicated, over the past couple of years we have had some difficulty recruiting staff, particularly in some locations. Our child safety officer vacancy this time last year was around 16 per cent and now, in June, it is around eight per cent so we have had a significant improvement in the vacancy rate.

In places where we do have hard-to-fill vacancies, what we have done over this last year or 18 months or so is put on paraprofessional positions and support positions. In locations where we have had difficulty recruiting CSOs and, therefore, there is an impact on workload for other workers in the office, we have put on paralegals, we have put on support positions and we have put on more child safety support officers. In fact, in some of those regions we are above the headcount, our funded establishment, because we have put on so many extra positions into those offices. We do not count those against case load because our agreement with the union through the EB is that we will only count funded child safety officers. We do not actually count, in that case load count, any of the other positions. Even if it is five vacancy CSOs and we have put on 10 other support positions, we still only report against the CSO positions. It is an issue that we do need to resolve, particularly with the union, about how we count case load and workload because currently it is actually really not reflective of all of the supports that we have put in place.

Ms CAMM: Thank you, Director-General. I have a subsequent question in regards to case load to the minister. Minister, I have been contacted by staff across the state in regard to case loads of 27, 43, 61. When I asked that question on notice, you were not able to provide that data. Why is that information not readily available when I ask for the highest number of case loads?

Mrs MULLEN: The question that I have was a question on notice provided to me that asked for a breakdown of current vacancy rates.

Ms CAMM: I am referring to question on notice 447.

Mrs MULLEN: I will ask the director-general again to speak to those particular matters. As the director-general indicated, we have had some issues in relation to vacancy rates within some of our offices. We recognise that there are some regions, particularly around Central Queensland and out west, where we have had higher than average vacancy numbers. That is reflected not only in Child Safety but across a lot of our frontline services where it has been really difficult to attract and recruit staff.

One of the things though that we are doing, as the director-general indicated, is we raised the starting pay for child safety officers to the highest level now in Australia. Those starting salaries now begin from \$95,000 to \$103,000, with 12.75 per cent superannuation. That uplift in salary has created an enticement and it has also provided welcome support to our current frontline staff.

The data for 31 March 2024 shows that there are now more child safety officers employed by the department than at any other time in history. As the director-general also pointed out, workload and case load do not mean the same thing. As I travel around Queensland and meet officers, child safety officers tell me that they are well supported by child safety support officers, by paralegals who are now taking on some of that court work and by cultural practice advisers who are providing that additional support when it comes to First Nations children and young people.

We will continue to invest in child safety officers in those positions, but it is a challenging time in terms of filling positions across Queensland, and we are not the only department that is facing that challenge.

Ms CAMM: Chair, I am happy with that response from the minister. I would like to defer to my colleague the deputy chair for another question.

Mr BENNETT: My question is about FairPlay vouchers. Are children in Child Safety eligible? How can we get a breakdown of those in resi-care, kinship care and foster care?

Mrs MULLEN: I will ask the director-general to speak to that.

Ms Mulkerin: All children in Queensland if they are eligible, regardless of whether they are in the care of the state, would get them. I do not think we would be able to get a breakdown of those. I do not think it is a corporate dataset that we would have access to.

Mr BENNETT: What is the available funding for extracurricular activities such as sport or educational activities outside the normal things that are available? Does the department have a funding model for that?

Mrs MULLEN: I am happy for the director-general to answer that.

Ms Mulkerin: As the minister said, most children in our care reside in family-based care, so they reside with foster carers and kinship carers. Those children and their carers have access to other supports and funding that we can provide to carers to enable them to take part in sporting activities, arts and all sorts of other activities like other children do.

Usually the process is that in a case planning discussion with the carer there will be a discussion about what other activities they might like to do. Like most families, there is a discussion about time, children's interests and contact with their families. All families are time pressured and every family makes a decision about what they prioritise. The availability of funding is not one of the issues that is a barrier. Funding is available for that.

CHAIR: You have about a minute and a half.

Mr BENNETT: Is that the same for children in resi-care?

Ms Mulkerin: Yes, it is.

Mr BENNETT: How many children in the care of Child Safety participate in these extracurricular activities?

Ms Mulkerin: We would not have a corporate data source for that information.

CHAIR: You have a minute.

Ms CAMM: I will try to be really quick, Chair. Minister, do you have any detail in regard to how many staff or CSOs were assaulted by children in state care? Do you keep that data?

Mrs MULLEN: I will ask the director-general whether there is any data kept in relation to this.

Ms Mulkerin: We do keep track of workplace incidents. I do not have the data with me. I would say though it is not a usual occurrence that CSOs or officers are assaulted by children. It is more likely that there might be an assault by a parent as opposed to a child.

Ms CAMM: Subsequently—

CHAIR: You only have about 20 seconds.

Ms CAMM:—do you keep data on non-government organisations or your partners that deliver services to the workforce around assault perhaps by children, whether that is by children in residential care?

Ms Mulkerin: The NGOs will keep their own data. They will manage their own staff.

Ms CAMM: So they do not share that data with—

CHAIR: Time is up now. In accordance with the motion of the House, I turn to the member for Maiwar for questions.

Mr BERKMAN: I want to start with a question in relation to my question on notice about children in the child protection system being housed overnight in commercial accommodation like hotels and motels. I understand the month-by-month breakdown could not be provided but that, in total, 130 children spent 643 nights in this type of accommodation last financial year. Are you able to confirm how many of those children were under 12 years old and how many were under five years old?

Mrs MULLEN: I will ask the director-general if we have that data. I am not sure that we do.

Ms Mulkerin: I will have to check whether we have that breakdown. We use commercial accommodation for a whole raft of reasons. It can be a carer and a child coming from North Queensland down here to the south-east corner for medical treatment. We will put them up in a hotel or motel, so that is counted as commercial accommodation. It could be families who live in the south-east corner and they are having contact with their child or young person who lives in North Queensland. We might pay for the accommodation for the whole family to have contact.

We pay for commercial accommodation for children and young people who live out west who might come in to the coast to access specialist treatment. It is a whole bundle of issues. Sometimes if we are moving a young person or a child from the south-east up north and they are moving to a particular placement closer to their country—for example, out in the cape—they might fly from here to Townsville, stay overnight in accommodation with a carer or a youth worker before going on to their community. It is used for a whole raft of things—which is that bucket of funding for those young people and children and their carers and families.

Mr BERKMAN: That makes sense. Along those lines, I am interested in instances where it might be required as longer term accommodation. Do you have any data on whether any of these children spent more than a week in hotel or motel accommodation? How long they might have spent in that accommodation and how common that is, I suppose, is what I am looking for.

Ms Mulkerin: It is not a common practice here in Queensland. In some other states it is common practice. It is not our practice here. That is why some of those residential care numbers are larger because we count it and we categorise it differently than some other states do about those emergent places. We usually use, as I said, commercial accommodation either for moving children or families

from one end of the state to the other for treatment or contact. Occasionally we have used commercial accommodation if a young person is in a placement now where the carers are asking for some respite, so we might organise for the young person and a youth worker or a carer to stay very short term somewhere else before they return back to their placement. It is usually for very short periods of time really for the purposes of navigating the size of the state.

Mrs MULLEN: In terms of the 2023-24 financial year, what we found is the department spent around \$261,027 on commercial accommodation, which is well down on the \$550,000 we spent the previous year. I think that shows that expenditure on commercial accommodation is trending down due to the work our department is doing to secure other more suitable accommodation and timely options for placing young people in those emergency situations.

Mr BERKMAN: Minister, are we able to come back to the question of how many under 12s are in commercial accommodation?

Mrs MULLEN: We will see if we can get that figure for you before the end of the hearing.

Mr BERKMAN: This is an adjacent question to come back to. If that data is not collected I would ask why that is the case, given the review of residential care last year specifically identified concerns about children under 12. Despite your comments about the variety of circumstances, it strikes me that would be interesting or useful data to have. That is a statement, not a question. I will move on.

The QAI's report *Child Safety's policies on parents with disability* raised concerns. Minister, does the government intend to start gathering data on how parents with disability are impacted by the Child Safety system?

Mrs MULLEN: In my role as the Minister for Disability Services it is an area where we do see a cross-section of not only young people with disabilities but parents with disabilities as well. We know, for example, that over one quarter of our children and young people who are subject to ongoing child protection intervention do have a disability. We have a group of parents with lived experience who meet with me on a regular basis. That is organised through the Family Inclusion Network. As parents, they speak to me about some of the challenges with that lived experience. They have raised issues of parents who may have disabilities themselves and issues around cognition and sometimes understanding some of the decisions that Child Safety is making which may be challenging to them. We really listen to those voices. We want to ensure that we are making the system the least difficult for those families and parents. Whilst I do not believe we have a specific measure, I will ask the director-general in terms of any work we might be doing in this space. We look at all of the experiences of parents with lived experience, and disabilities is one of those areas that does come up.

Ms Mulkerin: I have also had a discussion with our colleagues at QAI about the practices and policies, and we have undertaken to work with them. We have given them access to our policies and practices, and we will work with them about making sure that our practice is robust, respectful and considered about parents with disabilities. As the minister said, we do have a high proportion of children with disabilities in our care. We are very mindful of the issues around understanding the work, the language that we use and the complexity of the system in which we are working. Families have to interact with us. We are just a couple of months out from implementing a new replacement for our current case management system which will allow us to gather a lot more data across the board about families and children so we can supplement the corporate data we currently have. I will check whether our new ICT system has an identifier for parents.

CHAIR: Member for Maiwar, we only have around 30 seconds left for a question.

Mr BERKMAN: I was interested in how many residential care workers have reported a change in work eligibility and have been required to be stood down while investigations were undertaken. If it is easy enough, could you include in the answer as well the current time lines for notification of eligibility issues and investigations?

Mrs MULLEN: I am not sure that would be information we would retain. It would be up to the individual providers who would have that data.

CHAIR: I will now turn to the member for Nicklin.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, you spoke about the post-care support that is being provided by your department. Are you able to provide examples of how young people leaving care have been able to utilise Extended Post Care Support to make their transition to adulthood easier?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. It was a really proud moment when the Queensland government announced the historic commitment to extend support for young people leaving care to the age of 21. Since the Extended Post Care Support program commenced in July 2023

we have really seen the real-life impacts of what that program has done in terms of setting some of these young people up with positive futures. I am really pleased to share some of those stories with you. One young person in north Brisbane was struggling to access the rental market. Through this program he was able to find a property and pay the rental bond and have his rent subsidised. When he found a job and needed help getting there, the Extended Post Care Support program paid for an electric scooter to help him get to work on time.

In addition to financial supports, the case work support of those NGOs that I mentioned who provide our Extended Post Care Support has been crucial. One of the workers has been able to help our young people to manage their anxiety about leaving care and develop goals for their future. Another young person was supported to access community housing through the program. They needed whitegoods, a fridge and a washing machine, to furnish their apartment and Extended Post Care Support chipped in with that funding. When they wanted to learn how to drive and needed to purchase driving lessons, the program provided support and covered the cost. We had a young person enrolled in TAFE to learn the essential skills that would help him get a well-paying job, and again Extended Post Care Support enabled him to secure a laptop to make that study possible. This young person also had family interstate, so the program facilitated travel and family contact and helped pay for some of that cost.

As members of the committee will know, in regional Queensland in particular having a car is everything. We had a third young person living in regional Queensland who, in order to get to a job and move on with his life in his home town, needed a car. Extended Post Care Support helped them get their licence by paying for those driving lessons. It also supported them to buy a car and help buy a mobile phone. In no small way the program made it possible for this young person to get a job.

Finally, another young person in regional Queensland was supported to complete a hospitality course and purchase work clothing. The program worker provided important personal support to assist that young person establish life goals and navigate the housing system. This is what good governments do: we help these young people, many of whom have been in care, to start a really positive, independent life through the financial support of the EPCS system.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 3 of the SDS, could you provide a detailed update on the review of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and young person in residential care?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. Sadly, we know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are overrepresented at every level of the child protection system. First Nations children represent about 26.1 per cent of all children subject to an intake, 46.9 per cent children of all children in out-of-home care and 38 per cent of children in residential care. We also that we need to take stronger efforts to ensure that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up connected to kin, community and culture. To date, we are investing as a government to address this over-representation. Between 2016-17 and 2026-27 that investment is estimated to be around \$775.22 million.

As previously mentioned, in July 2023 the Queensland government in partnership with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak and the QFCC commenced the review into the residential care system. The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak CEO, Garth Morgan, joined other First Nations stakeholders to clearly say that residential care was not the best place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We are listening to that and we are acting.

As part of the five-year residential care road map, we did commit to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to review every First Nations young person who is in residential care. That is what we call the What Would It Take initiative. What Would It Take was initially targeted towards the 775 children in residential care on 30 September 2023. Many of these children needed additional supports: three in four had complex trauma and behaviours that stemmed from it; two in five had a disability diagnosis; a further one in four had a suspected disability and were awaiting screening and diagnosis; and three in five had multiple complex needs that had contributed to them being placed in residential care.

Obviously, supporting these young people requires comprehensive and nuanced approaches, and What Would It Take includes a deep analysis of each child's care arrangements. It looks at opportunities to strengthen connections to kin, community, culture and country and developing a transition plan out of residential care wherever appropriate. So far, we have already seen 153 of these young people transition from residential care. We will continue to focus on the needs of each individual child and will work with our partners to ensure co-design planning to get the best outcomes for First Nations children and young people.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the SDS, are you able to provide an update on the rollout of delegated authority?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. It really leads on quite nicely in terms of the work that we have been doing with our First Nations children. We are committed to improving the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. What we do know is that we do not have all of the answers and it is really important that we continue to work closely with First Nations families and communities to effectively ask the right questions.

Through the generational Our Way strategy that I mentioned, we have invested more than \$775 million to address the overrepresentation of First Nations families in child protection. In 2023-24, three in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care were with either kin, Indigenous carers or First Nations owned residential care services. A key action under the Our Way strategy is the implementation of delegated authority. Delegated authority enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations to perform agreed functions in relation to child protection. It really highlights the immense value and importance of connection to family and culture for those people. It also recognises that children are better supported by the organisations that understand their needs best.

We had two initial delegated authority trial sites and they are showing remarkable success. I have had the opportunity to visit both. One is at REFOCUS on the Sunshine Coast, which is in the member for Nicklin's electorate, and the other is Central Queensland Indigenous Development, or CQID, in Rockhampton and Emerald. I have visited both REFOCUS and CQID in Rockhampton. As at 30 June 2024, approved delegations have been made for 197 children across these two sites, and REFOCUS and CQID have supported 36 children to be reunified with their family. The remaining children are in the process of either being reunified or having their connections with family, culture and community strengthened.

I am pleased to report that from 1 January 2024 eight more sites have come online in terms of delegated authority—on Palm Island, Ipswich North, Toowoomba South, Springfield, Browns Plains, Mermaid Beach, Inala and Mount Gravatt. On 1 February 2024 a delegated authority also commenced in Mackay, and on 1 March another two services have been funded in the Torres Strait and Kowanyama.

The value of delegated authority cannot be overstated. One young person has been supported to build a stronger relationship with their family and with their community before leaving care. They were able to engage in family time and their carer was supported by the organisation to travel to their community to spend time with their grandmother, aunts, uncles and cousins. Another example is the safe reunification of a sibling group with their mother. This included the family being part of a yarning circle of care brought around the children. Mum, grandma and other family members were part of a significant conversation about how and when reunification would occur.

We are very excited about delegated authority. The Miles government will continue to implement new sites in 2024-25 which focus on the needs and support of our First Nations children.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Our time for questions is complete but I note there were some outstanding questions. Do you have answers for the committee or do you intend to take those questions on notice?

Mrs MULLEN: We will be providing those towards the end of the hearing, if I can. I do have an answer to one of the questions raised by the member for Whitsunday. The question was in relation to my residential care visits. I apologise because I have been travelling a lot across the state so it is a bit hard for me to try to recall where I have been. I did visit a residential care site in Townsville and also one in Brisbane in the Centenary suburbs. As I indicated, there were no children there at the time as they were all at school.

CHAIR: There were some other outstanding ones: the type of resi care facilities visited by the minister; in the last 12 months, the number of children under six months in resi care; and the cohort of children in resi care reaching 90 per cent school attendance.

Mrs MULLEN: We have the answers to all of those questions now. I will ask the director-general to speak to those.

Ms Mulkerin: In relation to the member for Maiwar's question about the number of young people aged under 12 placed in a commercial accommodation, we do not have that data available as it is managed locally. It is not a corporate data that we have available.

In relation to the member for Whitsunday's question about the highest number of placements for a child in care, the highest number of placements for an individual child in care is not part of standard corporate reporting and may potentially identify a child. However, public reporting on the department's

Our Performance website includes a measure of the number of children exiting care by number of placements experienced. For the year ending 31 March 2024, a total of 2,294 children exited care. Of those, 102 had 10 or more placements during their time in care. This is less than five per cent of all children who exited care. The majority of children exiting care had three or fewer placements during their time in care. That was 72 per cent.

There was a question about how many children would reach a threshold of 90 per cent school attendance. The school attendance rate for children in care in general in 2023 was 83.6 per cent. I think that leaves one outstanding question in relation to the youngest child.

Mr BENNETT: The first question that we had asked was the date of the visit.

Mrs MULLEN: Sorry, I am happy to provide that. It was Thursday, 11 July in Townsville, and Thursday, 18 July in Brisbane.


Mr BENNETT: Thank you.

CHAIR: There is one question outstanding, which was the number of children under six months in resi care in the last 12 months.

Mrs MULLEN: We will provide that by the end of the hearing.

CHAIR: Thank you. With that, we have reached the end of the time allocated to examine the proposed expenditure for the child safety portfolio area. The committee will now adjourn for a break. The hearing will resume at 2.30 with examination of estimates for the portfolio area of seniors and disability services.

Proceedings suspended from 2.18 pm to 2.30 pm.

 **CHAIR:** Welcome back, Minister and officials. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of seniors and disability services open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: I pass to the shadow minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Welcome, Minister and staff. It is lovely to see you all here. Minister, I note your concerns in March about the NDIS process. Both you and the Premier expressed concerns about the federal government's legislation that had been done without consultation. Given your concerns and those of the Premier about the lack of information from the federal government, how well has the federal government's NDIS program been integrated with Queensland programs?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. As the member would recognise, we are undergoing a significant amount of reform when it comes to disability across Australia. Obviously, we have had a disability royal commission—a 4½-year commission into the abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability. We saw out of that 12 volumes of work and 222 recommendations. At the same time, we have had an independent review of the National Disability Insurance Scheme—again, with a number of recommendations and actions in relation to the NDIS. As the Minister for Disability Services, I represent Queensland on our Disability Reform Ministerial Council. Along with all states and territories, we are working closely with the Australian government on ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the NDIS. I think we are all very supportive of ensuring the NDIS is sustainable into the future.

One of the things that came out of the NDIS review was consideration of a number of factors—reviewing some of the legislative measures within the NDIS but also looking at the future of what foundational supports will look like. The Commonwealth government introduced a bill—the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) Bill—on 27 March 2024. That is currently before the Senate committee. The bill is a complex and technical piece of legislation that will commence a process of fundamentally changing aspects of how the NDIS works. These changes might include adjustments to the rules to access the scheme, how funding is allocated, what funding can be spent on and what supports will be considered NDIS supports and which will not.

What I will say is that states and territories, including Queensland, have raised concerns that there was insufficient time and opportunity for people with disability and for states and territories to determine the service and financial impact of the changes prior to the introduction of that bill. I have written to Minister Shorten on a number of occasions to seek consultation and engagement with the Commonwealth on fully understanding the implications of the bill, including what the phasing of that implementation will look like.

As the Minister for Disability Services, what I will assure you is that I will continue to advocate for a fair deal for all Queenslanders with disability, mindful of the work that is happening with foundational supports that our government is very committed to doing.

Mr LANGBROEK: Going along with the theme of some of the answers that you just gave, Minister, can you advise of the consequences of delaying the responses to the recommendations of the disability royal commission and the NDIS review from 31 March to mid-2024 and how that is going to affect the rollout of foundational supports?

Mrs MULLEN: The work we are doing is not one or the other. What you will see is that there can be legislation on the NDIS whilst we also do the work—we are doing the work—on foundational supports. That work is being undertaken through Minister Amanda Rishworth. We have the NDIS review work and some of the changes to the NDIS whilst we continue to do foundational supports. All of that work is happening in tandem. Again, it does not need to be one or the other.

When we talk about a delay in terms of NDIS, I do not believe it is necessarily going to cause a delay, but we also want to make sure we are getting this right. The NDIS has been in place now for a decade, and we want to make sure that the future of the NDIS is sustainable but also working for people with disability. What we will want to see is that we have the NDIS right, we will have foundational supports right—and, of course, our mainstream services as well, like health and education, here in Queensland.

Dr ROBINSON: Minister, in terms of the foundational supports, can you advise the committee about the implementation dates that will be Queensland's responsibility?

Mrs MULLEN: States and territories, along with the federal government, have committed to a foundational support strategy. That has not been finalised as yet, so I cannot speak to implementation. There is an expectation that some services will begin as soon as next year. Obviously, we would want to see more work around jointly designing those additional foundational supports to ensure that people with disability have the support and access they need. One of the things that, certainly from a Queensland perspective, we want to ensure is that, overall, our health systems and disability systems will be better off. Importantly for us, it is making sure that Queenslanders with disability can access the right mix of supports they need at the time.

At the Disability Reform Ministerial Council meeting on 28 June, all disability ministers agreed to work on a joint response to the NDIS review by the end of this year and also around the work we are doing on foundational supports. What I will say is that, in terms of implementation, we are yet to see the foundational support strategy. Once we have that and we have an understanding of what foundational supports will be and what they look like, we can then look to implementation timeframes.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, can you reassure participants there will not be gaps between NDIS changes and Queensland's foundational support commencement?

Mrs MULLEN: What I will guarantee is that Queensland will be advocating strongly to ensure foundational supports are in place before there are any NDIS changes. We recognise that what we do not want is people having their access and their services changed and not having anything to fall back on. That is something I have strongly advocated to Minister Shorten about, to indicate that our preference is to see foundational supports introduced first and then to see those changes made to the NDIS. That is the basis of the discussions we have been having with the federal government and that is the position of Queensland—that we would like to see foundational support strategies in place.

We recognise that we have a lot going on in disability services at the moment. We have the disability royal commission recommendations, the NDIS review recommendations, an Australian disability strategy and a Queensland disability plan, all of which have actions. One of the things Queensland has taken the lead on is bringing all of that together in a very cohesive manner that actually shows our disability community how we will be prioritising all of those actions and reforms. We have done that through what we call the Queensland Disability Reform Framework. I was pleased to launch it today. With that will also come \$160 million in initial funding that speaks to some of the priorities that we want to see through both the DRC recommendations and reforms and the NDIS review.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. Turning to something specific now, can you advise the committee about something I have asked about over the last year as well, the future of the Assessment and Referral Team which provides intensive supports for Queenslanders with disability in remote locations to access the NDIS as it will cease in its current form on 31 December 2024?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. Funding for the Assessment and Referral Team was always intended to be time limited while Queensland's transition to the NDIS was completed. Most people can now seek NDIS access support through Commonwealth funded Partners in the

Community services. As the NDIS access process improves, monthly referrals to the ART have decreased. In fact, they have almost halved from 149 in December 2023 to 76 in June 2024. Recognising the improved NDIS access processes, the need for a Queensland government referral service has also reduced. The 2023-24 budget committed \$16.2 million over four years to continue the existing operation of the ART until December 2024 with a small specialist team from January 2025. This specialist team, which is eight full-time equivalents, will support eligible people with complex needs, navigating multiple mainstream service systems to access the NDIS, ensuring Queenslanders will still have the supports when needed.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Minister, for that. I turn to another issue which has been raised with me by other providers: Information Linkages and Capacity Building, or ILC, grants which are coming to an end. When will these supports be made available for disability and community organisations, bearing in mind that, under the NDIS, that is what ILCs do now?

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you. I appreciate and have spoken to a number of providers who are concerned about their ILC funding and it is something I have advocated to Minister Shorten about. We understand there is a lot of community angst and concern about the ILC grants. These are a matter for the federal government, but from a Queensland perspective, we continue to advocate to the federal government about ensuring there is, where possible, ILC funding for some really important services that have been provided here in Queensland through our community. Again, that is a matter for the Commonwealth government, but Queensland continues to advocate in support of those providers.

Mr LANGBROEK: In that case, can you clarify for me, as I look at the definition of 'general foundational supports' which says includes programs and activities like information advice, which is what I understand ILC is and, therefore, I would have thought would have been covered by Queensland foundational supports, a number of organisations have said to me they are worried about the grants being given to organisations that do not provide specific support in the disability area. I suppose the question is a two-parter: firstly, you are saying it is still going to be federal, and the second part is about the concerns of individual groups who say they just do not get a look-in on those grants?

Mrs MULLEN: What is clear, as I indicated to the member for Oodgeroo, foundational supports are still being determined through the Foundational Supports Strategy, so nothing has been determined yet in relation to what those foundational supports will look like. Once those are determined—and we do think navigation, linkages and capacity building will hopefully form part of that and, as I said, we are not quite sure yet how all that would work—but it may be that the ILC funding becomes something different through foundational supports. Again, none of that has yet been determined, as we continue to work through what the Foundational Supports Strategy will look like. I appreciate that for a lot of our services they are worried and nervous about what the future looks like for them in terms of some of the service provision they are currently providing and we, of course, will advocate strongly to ensure the services that they provide and which are valuable for people with disability will continue to be supported in some way. However, as I indicated, we are still confirming what foundational supports will look like and what that will mean for Queensland.

Mr LANGBROEK: Another question is about assistive technology. Has the government or the department provided any feedback to the federal government about inappropriate assistive technology recommendations that some clients receive that are influenced by company associations? An example can be someone wearing a pendant in the case of falls, but there are other companies that are able to provide other types of technological supports. For example, someone who may be very elderly, may collapse and may not be able to even press the button, but sometimes companies providing an NDIS package will say, 'The only thing we can give you is this particular thing—a pendant.' Have you had any of that feedback or have you given that to the federal government?

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you for the question, member. No, that is not an issue that has been raised with me directly, I must say, but that would be a matter for the NDIA specifically. Of course, if there are people who are concerned about this, I am always happy to have a look at the matter, but it is not a matter that has been raised with me in the past.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, how is the government planning to invest to support the over 500,000 carers who provide informal care that would cost the government hundreds of millions of dollars if it was replaced with paid care?

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you. I feel very fortunate, as the minister, to also be the minister for carers, and that is a role that I take very seriously. As the member may be aware, we have the Queensland Carers Advisory Council and this is really about our commitment to ensuring our voluntary carers are valued and supported. I agree with you, our carers make a significant contribution to the people they

care for which benefits, of course, the economic and social wellbeing of our whole community. We recognise, particularly, there are also young carers and there are grandparents, all of which fall into that category as well. I am really pleased to say that I have had the opportunity to meet with our Queensland Carers Advisory Council on two occasions since becoming the minister. They are doing some significant work and, in particular, they are working on a new carers' action plan that has been developed and will be released for 2024-26. Through the Queensland budget, we have provided \$150,000 to enhance the activities of the Carers Advisory Council under this plan.

Other things that we also recognise include—and this is the feedback we have received from our Carers Advisory Council—that unpaid carers may also experience lower wellbeing, higher psychological distress and poorer physical health as a result of their caring duties, and that there are also significant financial costs associated with being a carer, including loss of income and superannuation. As at 30 June, the Queensland government is doing a number of things, including providing the carer business discount cards to 17,900 carers to help ease cost-of-living pressures. We are investing \$1.1 million in the Time for Grandparents program which provides advice and support to unpaid carers with primary responsibility for their grandchildren. We are also funding Carers Queensland annually as a peak body; the work they are doing is really important. We are also supporting the Queensland Advisory Council, including by allocating some funding, about \$150,000, for the delivery of priority projects that they have identified. We also, as the member may be aware, have the Care is Everywhere campaign. This is about elevating the understanding of our carers. Sometimes, as has been described to me, is sometimes people do not even realise they are carers necessarily, they are just getting on and doing that work, but for us we need to and we want to recognise them. We have Carers Week activities promoting Grandparents' Day. There is some work we are also doing on the Queensland carer recognition legislation as well and looking at a review of that in the future.

Mr LANGBROEK: I appreciate the answer you have just given, minister, but I want to pursue a little bit more about carers. Has the government lobbied the federal government to ensure Queensland carers are adequately supported through income support and the Carer Gateway program?

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you, member. That is certainly something that the Queensland Carers Advisory Council has raised with me as an issue and certainly there is some advocacy work that we continue to do with the federal government, in terms of those matters that relate to the Commonwealth's jurisdiction and where we can offer support for those carers as well.

Mr LANGBROEK: Again, on that issue about assistance, what about lobbying the federal government about the fact that superannuation is not paid on the carer allowance and carer payments, and carers, mainly women, are suffering financial hardship due to their caring responsibilities?

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you, member. As I indicated, that is an issue that has been raised with me through the Queensland Carers Advisory Council. There are individual members of that council who have lived experience of caring and the financial impact it has had on them, particularly around superannuation. Again, as the Queensland government, we will continue to advocate for carers in Queensland to ensure they have access to financial support during these very challenging times at the moment.

Mr LANGBROEK: As 'aged and disabled carer' is the fastest growing job in the last census in Queensland—it increased by 95,000 to 227,000 from 2016 to 2021—what workforce planning is the department doing? I am happy for the director-general to answer this, if appropriate.

Mrs MULLEN: The aged-care workforce is not a responsibility of the Queensland government; that would fall under the federal government through the Minister for Aged Care, Annika Wells. The Queensland government does not have any input into the aged-care workforce. Is that your question member, or are you talking about—

Mr LANGBROEK: Whilst it might not be the government's responsibility, I would have thought that, given it is a state service and we have the workers in our economy, department officials would negotiate with the federal government about future plans for workers in this space.

Mrs MULLEN: Not in aged care because, as I said, it is not the responsibility of the Queensland government to manage aged-care facilities or to manage age care.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am sorry, minister, I do not mean only aged care but the job itself. In our economy, because of the amount of work that has come through the NDIS, we now need more people in the sector—

Mrs MULLEN: Disability workers—not aged care, okay.

Mr LANGBROEK: The job classification is ‘aged and disabled carer’.

Mrs MULLEN: Sure. We absolutely recognise the need to look at our disability care workforce. Again, a lot of that is with individual providers and, again, that workforce is a Commonwealth responsibility but we remain committed to seeing more workers. We recognise that, particularly with our geography in Queensland, we sometimes have very thin markets when it comes to disability services and finding a suitable workforce in those areas. We encourage as many people who would like to work in this space to come and work in it but we recognise that it is not just about creating a workforce, especially in areas like disability services or aged care, you have to have the right people doing this work—people who really care and who are able to care for the most vulnerable in our community which are some of our people with disability and also with our older Queenslanders. We will continue to look at how we can support the federal government with some of those measures, but we certainly recognise that it is a growing workforce—absolutely. We will do our best to try and assist where we can.

CHAIR: I now call the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 5 of the SDS and noting the commitment by all jurisdictions to respond to the disability royal commission, will you update the committee on the Queensland government’s response?

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you, member, for the question. In line with the government’s commitment to respond to all recommendations directed to Queensland by mid-2024, it is my pleasure today to table for the committee the Queensland government’s response to the disability royal commission’s final report. I seek to leave to table that report. I also seek leave to table the *Queensland disability reform framework: the next chapter*.

CHAIR: I will wait until we receive the documents to make sure the two documents are in order before we can ask the committee whether they will agree. They look in order, is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mrs MULLEN: I confirm to the committee that Queensland has either accepted, or accepted in principle, 104 of the 130 recommendations that were directed to Queensland. The Queensland government will further consider 23 recommendations. Some 85 of those are a joint responsibility between the Australian state and territory governments. In response to the royal commission, the Queensland government is committing to a series of important reforms, including: establishing a legislative framework for a nationally consistent reportable conduct scheme following the introduction of the Child Safe Organisations Bill 2024; ensuring that the fundamental rights and freedoms of people with disability are protected by progressing the Respect at Work and Other Matters Amendment Bill 2024; strengthening procedures and policies to increase participation in state schools and providing real choice for parents and students with disability; and expanding the housing reform agenda by delivering housing and homeless supports, including the increased availability of more inclusive and alternative housing models and improving choice and control over living arrangements. As well as improving public sector employment outcomes, we are working with all governments to establish a shared decision-making mechanisms to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander with disability. It is important for the committee to note that all governments have agreed in principle to the Disability Reform Ministerial Council overseeing the implementation of recommendations under a transparent and regular reporting and monitoring framework.

The recommendations within the disability royal commission’s final report represent the voices of more than 10,000 people with disability, their families and carers who courageously shared their experiences and perspectives. Queensland’s response—tabled here today—has taken great care to listen and to respect those voices. We acknowledge the diversity of views on key issues such as education and housing and the need to balance this with providing choice to Queensland’s disability community. The *Queensland disability reform framework: the next chapter*, which I also tabled, sets out the Queensland government’s disability reform agenda. This framework has been developed in consultation with the disability community. It provides a cohesive implementation of responses to those overlapping recommendations from the disability royal commission’s final report and the final report on the independent review of the NDIS.

Under this framework, initial priority actions have been identified that will help provide a foundation for long-term, positive reforms. An immediate focus under this framework will be, as I mentioned earlier, the jointly designed and commissioned foundational supports that have been agreed by National Cabinet in late 2023. I am pleased to say that the framework is also supported by an initial

investment of more than \$160 million in the 2024-25 state budget. This investment reflects the importance the Miles government places on improving disability services and to listening and responding to the sector's voices. Under this initial investment there is increased funding for disability advocacy. This includes: an additional \$5 million to expand individual and systematic advocacy; \$10 million to increase services under the Queensland Community Support Scheme; \$6.5 million to pilot a hospital assistive technology loan pool; an expansion of supports provided under the Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme; \$24.4 million for a sector-led stakeholder engagement strategy; the improvement of disability data and reporting; and the strategic leadership and coordination of disability reforms.

There is also additional funding for initiatives in youth justice, corrective services and court settings. This includes \$79 million over four years and \$28.1 million ongoing to enhance supports to people with disability who are involved in the criminal justice system and \$30.5 million over four years and \$10.3 million ongoing to enhance supports for young people with disability who are involved in the criminal justice system. We also have funding of \$8.4 million over two years to undertake policy development to consider reform opportunities for the guardianship system and \$7.5 million over two years to ensure the continuity of selected disability supports for children with autism while foundational supports are designed. The Queensland government's response to the royal commission's report has been shaped by the voices of Queenslanders with disabilities, their families and carers as well as the Queensland disability sector. I wish to sincerely thank them for their engagement and support of this critical work.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 5 of the SDS, would you be able to outline the role that the Queensland disability advocacy sector played in the development of Queensland's response to the disability royal commission?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. We, of course, recognise that the lived experiences of people with disability are critically important and should be at the centre of all decisions that will impact them. The Miles government is committed to ensuring people with disability, their families and carers are valued, supported and have a voice. As I mentioned earlier, the disability royal commission's final report recommendations represent the voices of 10,000 people with disability, their families and carers who shared their experiences and perspectives. Whilst the importance of these voices is acknowledged, the Queensland government recognise the need for insight into what is most important for Queenslanders in addressing the recommendations from both the disability royal commission and the independent review of the NDIS.

The Queensland Disability Reform Framework, which I tabled earlier today, provides a cohesive approach to disability reform in the context of these two significant inquiries. The disability reform round tables, which I hosted on 4 March and 16 July 2024, involved a range of disability sector stakeholders including representatives from Queensland's disability advocacy sector such as the Queenslanders with Disability Network and the Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion. I also want to acknowledge the network CEO, Michelle Moss, who reiterated the importance of delivering real change and upholding the rights and needs of Queenslanders with disability.

The insights gained from these round tables provided key considerations for our disability reform priority works. Through the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program, the Queensland government funds a range of organisations to deliver advocacy service to Queenslanders with disability. These services help and support people with disability to: understand their rights; navigate the NDIS and other mainstream services; address discrimination, conflict and unfair treatment; build system and individual capacity; and provide information and referrals to disability support services.

As I also indicated, in 2024-25 the Miles government will invest \$160 million as an initial response to our disability royal commission and NDIS review. That includes \$5 million additional for enhanced advocacy service. We recognise that it is really important that we acknowledge and expand individual and systemic disability advocacy to uphold the rights and needs of people with disability in Queensland. I will say that this \$5 million is on top of the \$4.9 million over five years and \$1.1 million ongoing per annum to continue the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program. I have had the opportunity to visit a number of these services across the state and I cannot tell you how invaluable they are for people with disability, especially as they navigate the NDIS at times. Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, 3,645 instances of advocacy services were provided to 2,567 unique service users by organisations under the program.

I do want to thank the Queensland disability sector for the work they do to not only support significant national policy reforms like our response to the disability royal commission, but also the individual advocacy work they do across our state each and every day.

CHAIR: We have about two minutes remaining.

Ms LUI: Minister, you have a Queensland Disability Advisory Council. With reference to page 5 of the SDS, can you please advise the committee how your council has supported you in delivering Queensland's response to the DRC?

Mrs MULLEN: The Queensland Disability Advisory Council, QDAC, provides me with advice on regional, state and national disability related matters affecting Queenslanders. Its membership is mainly people with lived experience of disability. They are a really strong advisory council and I feel very honoured to be working with them. It is also one of the most informative and important ways for me and for our government to hear the views and experiences of people with disability.

QDAC plays a role in guiding the delivery of Queensland's Disability Plan, because that is important, so both the disability royal commission report and the NDIS review made recommendations on improving the participation of people with disability, particularly around reform and governance. That is some of the work that QDAC has been working with me on. I am also pleased to advise the committee that QDAC provided valuable input into the development of the Queensland Disability Reform Framework, which underpins our disability royal commission report. I want to particularly thank my chair, Sharon Boyce, for her outstanding leadership and guidance on developing Queensland's response to the disability royal commission. I am confident QDAC will continue to play a critical role in providing advice on disability reforms arising from the recommendations of both the DRC and the NDIS Review.

CHAIR: I will now give the call to the opposition members.

Mr LANGBROEK: I will continue with a couple of the questions we had about specific issues in the sector. My next question, Minister, is to do with the disability sector workforce. What is the government's plan with respect to the low level of experience of behaviour support practitioners as this means that those with complex needs are not receiving the support required in volume and quality?

Mrs MULLEN: As the member would be aware, we do have some legislation before the House in particular around restrictive practices. In relation to that we recognise that at this time we have what you would call thin markets in terms of behaviour support planning. A lot of that work has not been allowed to thrive in a market environment and as a result we are seeing that those markets remain thin. I will speak to the legislation because obviously it is before the House. I will say that through the legislation we are looking at a really comprehensive change to the way that we undertake behaviour support and also restrictive practices that will fundamentally make a real difference to that. We are also conscious that when you bring in a scheme like this you have to manage it very carefully and so we will work progressively to build up those markets and to build up that competence within the Queensland workforce when it comes to behaviour management and support.

CHAIR: Before I give you the call, member, I would like to acknowledge that the member for South Brisbane is at the table.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is about the answer to question on notice No. 11 which is about AS&RS. I wonder if you could brief the committee about the particular issue of AS&RS and the fact that it is due to finish in 2025 in terms of the government supported services. I have a couple of questions about AS&RS. I note the number quoted is 393 at the moment who are accessing that service. I think originally it was 550. Could you brief the committee about the future for AS&RS?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. Accommodation Support and Respite Services have been a very important service here in Queensland and they have supported many families over a long period. I have had the opportunity to meet with a number of clients who utilise the Accommodation Support and Respite Services as well as the staff who work within those facilities.

For those who may not be aware, accommodation support and respite services provide assistance, supported independent living arrangements and short-term accommodation support through overnight centre-based respite facilities. We as a government have been providing that work for a very long time. As at 30 June 2024, 495 Queenslanders living with disability were supported through independent living arrangements and short-term overnight respite stays. We know that clients and their families rely on and trust in the care provided by our highly trained and skilled staff. Importantly, AS&RS is now a registered NDIS provider. The funding for AS&RS provides clients with supported independent living.

Since January 2024 the department has drawn down funds from clients' NDIS plans in the same way that all NDIS service providers operate. One of the important things to know is that in 2023-24 AS&RS supported a total of 568 clients—that is important information—but we have also seen a number of clients exiting from AS&RS as well as other options through the NDIS becoming available. One of the critical things is that Queensland has made the decision that we will continue to support accommodation services, but we recognise that respite services in particular are starting to wane in terms of their popularity as clients and families are choosing other options. So the government has made the decision that we will begin to cease respite services going forward. I will ask the director-general to speak to the specifics of how that will work. Our government continues to be committed to accommodation support services going forward.

Ms Mulkerin: Thank you, Minister. As the minister has just stated, the government has renewed its commitment to ongoing funding and support for the accommodation services, so that has now been locked in and, as the minister also said, our own internal services are now NDIS registered. In relation to respite services, though, the government made the announcement through the budget this year to begin to phase out the delivery of centre-based respite services in response to changing community needs. We have seen over the last three years almost 300 families choosing to transition from centre-based respite care and support to more flexible approaches available through a wide range of NDIS providers. As at the end of June 2024, there are only 102 children and adults accessing the eight respite services that the state has been operating. We have been working to inform all families impacted by that decision, so a series of information sessions have been held and there have been one-on-one discussions with families. We will walk alongside all of those families to assist them to find other options that suit their needs and we will travel at the pace they are comfortable with and we will only close when all of those families are ready to transition to other options available through their NDIS packages.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Minister and Director-General. That is much appreciated, Chair. In that case, could I also then ask the minister if she could provide to the committee the cost per client including all costs, so staff in the house, support staff in service centres and regional offices, all staff to director-general level, AS&RS office lease costs, lease costs for cars for staff, leased car parks for staff and IT costs? I would like a global cost. I do not expect you to provide it now, but I wonder if you would take it on notice to break it down.

Mrs MULLEN: That is a lot of information that is being requested of us through this estimates hearing.

CHAIR: It certainly is, yes.

Mrs MULLEN: We can come back towards the end of this session just to confirm potentially what information we do have that we may be able to provide, but I can share some of it. The direct service delivery actual expenses for these services was \$141.9 million in 2023-24—that is, \$138.7 million for accommodation support and \$3.2 million for respite services. I appreciate that the member's question had a lot of detail and we will see what we can get for you, but it is unlikely that we will be able to supply all of that information in the time given.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thanks, Minister; I understand that. Could I also have how many FTEs AS&RS has now, including agency staff paid by the department?

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

Mr LANGBROEK: To the minister, but if it needs to be to the director-general I understand that.

Mrs MULLEN: We are just confirming if we have those numbers. I can give you that we have 1,286 accommodation support staff as at 28 June 2024 and 27 respite support staff as at 28 June 2024. I do not think I have any figures in relation to agency staff, but if there are agency staff we will try to get you that figure before the end of the hearing.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you. With regard to supported accommodation, have you had any discussions with the Minister for Housing about the uncertain future for level 3 supported accommodation providers potentially affecting some of Queensland's most vulnerable? I understand this is not specifically your portfolio, but there are 1,700 people who are within these 42 different providers who are concerned about their future.

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. As the member would be aware, there has been a parliamentary inquiry into this matter and I welcome the findings and recommendations of, I believe, this parliamentary committee's inquiry. I am pleased that the voices of clients have been well represented as well. I also welcome the committee's acknowledgement of the importance of individual needs assessments for residents accessing level 3 residences.

The Queensland government has worked with the Supported Accommodation Providers Association and Griffith University to develop a needs assessment tool for clients. The government has also established SAPA as a funded peak body for the sector and provided additional funding to Queenslanders with Disability Network to strengthen the voice of clients. The disability royal commission is another important source of information and we will carefully consider any related recommendations and have provided some advice in terms of our response today. It is important that we work with people with disability and the sector on any reforms to improve the delivery of services and regulation and oversight. However, given this matter is for the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works, I would refer any further matters to her.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is about the elder abuse helpline, Minister. I wonder if you could brief the committee about assessment of the calls the department receives. In what form do you receive an assessment of the calls? I want to tell you about a very specific person, please, Chair, with your indulgence. An elderly man contacted my office and said that he was concerned that he only got the answering machine when he rang the Elder Abuse Helpline and was then concerned that anyone returning the call would potentially speak to an abuser, and that was his concern. I wonder what assessment the government does about the data received from the Elder Abuse Helpline.

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. The elder abuse hotline is operated on our behalf by UnitingCare. In relation to that specific matter you have raised, I would be happy to take that offline to understand the specifics of it. The helpline operates from 9 am to 5 pm Monday to Friday, and calls outside of those hours are returned the next business day. I appreciate that that is obviously the concern of the person you have been speaking with.

Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024 the unit received around 4,458 phone calls to the helpline, including 2,674 notifications of abuse. As a department we do not operate the elder abuse hotline, so I cannot speak to the way that it is operating. However, given the issues you have raised specifically around after-hours calls and how those matters are addressed, we would be happy to speak with the provider to better understand how they are operating those return phone calls and, as you rightly point out, ensuring they are not in fact speaking to potential abusers of those elderly people.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you for that reassurance, Minister. Director-General, how many staff does the department have above the approved FTE, and please include contractors, consultants and employment agency staff?

Ms Mulkerin: I was just looking for the numbers in relation to your previous question. If I can circle back to your question about the disability staff, in terms of FTE and headcount for the seniors and disability services as in AS&RS, the headcount is currently 1,631 and FTE is 1,451. In terms of the breakdown, I am not sure whether we will be able to get the contractors, but I can break down casual, permanent and temporary. Of residential care officers who are working in the homes, which I think is what you are after, 161 are casual, 666 are permanent and 115 are temporary of the total 942. That is a lot of numbers.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you. I can get that from *Hansard*. My next question is about an answer to prehearing question on notice No. 5, which was about disability worker screening checks. I have raised this at previous hearings. My question is really about specific numbers. I know that most applications are finalised quickly. I am interested in how many have taken more than 28 days to be finalised or how many are currently in the system.

Mrs MULLEN: As the member would recognise, NDIS worker screening is a really important safeguard that protects the rights and safety of people with disability in our service environments. We have a no-card no-start policy, which means that workers must have a clearance before they can start working and volunteering with people with disability. The system is automated meaning that, once verified by an employer, applications without a criminal history, which represent almost 90 per cent of applications, are processed in under 0.7 days. Approximately 10 per cent of applicants have a criminal history or other assessable information that needs a careful risk assessment to confirm their suitability to work with people with disability. Those are the applications that take longer due their complexity.

I can confirm that the system is working well with over 274,000 clearances issued from commencement on 1 February to 30 June 2024. In 2023-24, 420 high-risk individuals were prevented from working with people with disability.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am sorry, Minister, but the question was about those applications that have taken more than 28 days. Again, it may be something that you might take on notice.

Mrs MULLEN: We will endeavour to have an answer for you before the end of the hearing in relation to that, if that information is available to us.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, can you advise when we will see the new seniors strategy?

Mrs MULLEN: As the member knows, this is very exciting—a seniors strategy. I am very excited about this. We know that older Queenslanders are living longer than any previous generation. They are staying more actively involved with their work, communities and families. We have recognised how important that is.

I am pleased to say that a seniors strategy is imminent. It has been informed through the voices of around 16,000 older Queenslanders. Those are Queenslanders who have attended things such as our Seniors Expos, our Seniors Savings Pop-Ups in shopping centres and through some significant work that COTA has been doing with us to better understand the needs of our older Queenslanders. We know that we are going to have more older Queenslanders. In 2023, there were around 926,752 Queenslanders over the age of 65, which is about 17 per cent of our population. We estimate that by 2053 that will grow to 22.6 so we want to ensure that we have clear strategies in place that support our seniors.

There are things that our seniors have told us that are important to them. They are things like health care. The cost of living is really important to them. We are obviously doing what we can, particularly in this Queensland budget with our electricity rebates and with rego, and also recognise that currently seniors have access to about 18 concessions and rebates available to them. The seniors strategy is imminent. I look forward to releasing that in due course.

CHAIR: Member, you have around two minutes.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Chair. In that case, I ask the Director-General, via the minister, to provide how much the department has spent on consultants, broken down individually if possible but otherwise a global figure is acceptable.

Ms Mulkerin: If I could circle back to answer your other question about headcount and FTE, for the whole department headcount: 5,945; funded FTE, 5,460.89. The amount that we have spent on contractors: \$62.92 million. The last question about consultants: \$2,000,074.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, that is very efficient.

CHAIR: There are 45 seconds, member, if you have another question.

Mr LANGBROEK: In October 2023, I asked question on notice 1355 about how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are registered with the NDIS. There were 230 then and 916 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in foster or kinship care registered with the NDIS. Could we have those figures up to now, please?

Mrs MULLEN: We will endeavour to get those answers for the member by the end of this session.

CHAIR: In accordance with the motion of the House, I now turn to the member for South Brisbane for questions.

Dr MacMAHON: My question is for the minister. Minister, further to your comments earlier about level 3 supported accommodation, I have been contacted by a level 3 supported accommodation provider who is potentially facing closure because of housing costs and housing insecurity. I am keen to know what support will be given to the residents there if they do have to relocate.

Mrs MULLEN: Member, that is a question for the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning. That is not a matter that falls within our portfolio responsibilities in terms of supported accommodation.

Dr MacMAHON: Even if they are people living with disability and mental illness?

Mrs MULLEN: Again, those are services that are provided through the department of housing. We do not provide specific supports through this department. Of course we would work with our housing counterparts to ensure that those residents are found suitable accommodation.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, can you detail what advice you have been able to give the department of housing or the Minister for Housing with regard to finding suitable locations for supported accommodation?

Mrs MULLEN: One of the things that I am really pleased about is that, through our Homes for Queenslanders plan, we have been able to put a real focus on disability housing. In fact, we recently launched what we are calling our partnering for inclusive housing with people with disability. That work has been undertaken with the support of this department and also Queenslanders With Disability

Network. Through this year's budget, we have announced about \$55 million to support that work. The work that we are doing through this department is around looking at how we co-design with people with disability, government, private and community housing and disability sector representatives, housing outcomes for people with disability. We know that in the disability royal commission housing was a significant issue that was raised.

As well as our Disability Reform Framework, we have looked at housing. That \$55.9 million investment for implementing partnering for inclusive housing will include additional funding for independent advocacy for people with disability who are homeless or living in supported accommodation, with an additional \$1.5 million per annum funding from January 2025 to support that work. Through this fund, we will be supporting some systemic and individual advocacy for those people to be able to find suitable accommodation.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, with regards to people who are currently occupying Queensland hospital beds while waiting for aged-care or disability accommodation, do you have any data on the proportion of those people who are waiting for disability accommodation and support?

Mrs MULLEN: I welcome the member's question. Long-stay beds is a critical issue for us here in Queensland. Particularly for NDIS and people with disability participants in hospital, it is a really important issue. It is also one that is reported on at every one of our Disability Reform Ministerial Council meetings now because we recognise this issue not only in terms of people with disability but also people awaiting aged-care places.

I have some figures for you. As at 27 May 2024, there were 1,013 long-stay patients, including 309 long-stay younger patients, who were medically ready for discharge from Queensland Health beds but were waiting for appropriate supports to return to the community. There are a number of issues that contribute to delays in discharging those Queenslanders, which include NDIS access and planning decisions, delays in securing adequate NDIS supports, a lack of services for complex care and, of course, we know there is a lack of suitable accommodation.

It is essential that people who no longer require hospital care can receive the supports they need. We do not want them sitting in hospital beds. That is something we continue to collaborate on between Health, Housing and Disability Services.

The Queensland government continues to work with the National Disability Insurance Agency, the NDIA, at a local level and nationally to enable Queenslanders to leave hospital on time. Since 2021, Queensland Health has invested \$21 million in the Long-Stay Rapid Response Program, which has funded essential discharge supports such as interim care, nursing care and equipment to help long-stay patients leave hospital safely.

I know of one matter that was brought to my attention locally in my electorate where someone was waiting to be discharged simply because they needed a shower chair. We were able to have that donated in order to be able to discharge that person from hospital. We recognise in Queensland that that is a significant issue. We continue to advocate strongly to the federal government, particularly around NDIS and also aged care, because it is impacting our hospital systems greatly.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, does the government have data on the representation of people with disabilities on government boards?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. That is not a quantum that we maintain. You would have to work through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in relation to that, as they maintain that data for us.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, does your department have any involvement with any strategies to increase representation of people with disabilities on government boards?

Mrs MULLEN: Absolutely. That is an important question. I think it extends not only in terms of people with disability but also obviously in my role as Minister for Multicultural Affairs. We are looking at how we ensure diversity within our boards. Again, that would be a question for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, who maintain our boards. At times we have requests through a whole-of-government framework where we are able to input particular applicants for those roles. Again, that is not a question that our department leads.

Mr BERKMAN: This has almost become an annual update on the FDS. Can we get an update on the state of play in the Forensic Disability Service? The first question is: how many residents are currently in the FDS?

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you, member, for your question in relation to the FDS. My understanding is that, as at 30 June, there are four clients detained to the service with ongoing treatment, care, support and protection provided to support them. There are four clients at this time.

Mr BERKMAN: Are you able to provide any general information—I am working on the assumption that the client known as 'Adrian' remains one of those patients. First of all, is that the case? Beyond that, how long have those other three clients been resident in the FDS?

Mrs MULLEN: I do not believe that we would be able to discuss those in detail. I apologise.

CHAIR: No. I do not think that would be appropriate. Member, the numbers are too small and identification is an issue.

Mr BERKMAN: With respect, Chair, these are issues that have been canvassed quite specifically in previous years. I note that Mr Matthew Lupi is here with us at the hearing today and has been able to provide quite detailed information in previous estimates hearings.

CHAIR: I will take some advice. I will allow the minister to answer as she sees fit.

Mrs MULLEN: I do think those numbers are quite small and I do think they would identify details about each of those individual clients, so I think we want to be very careful about what information we provide to the member. As the minister, I would not feel comfortable to be releasing that information publicly at this time.

I can provide you with some information. As I indicated, there are four clients that remain detained to the service. One of these clients resides in the community as part of a structured and planned transition and remains the responsibility of the FDS, living in a new purpose-built step-up step-down accommodation. In addition, two clients have successfully transitioned from the service in 2023 and are now supported by an NDIS funded NGO. One client is in independent housing and one client is living in a new purpose-built step-up step-down accommodation service.

CHAIR: Your time is up. I move to the member for Nicklin.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 5 of the SDS, what is being done to support seniors in Queensland?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. As I mentioned earlier, we have in Queensland about 70 per cent of the population, or more than 926,000 people, aged 65 years or over. We are projecting that that will more than double, to 1.7 million, by 2053. For our older Queenslanders we are, of course, providing practical support around cost-of-living pressures and making sure they remain informed, safe and protected.

Our new strategy, as I mentioned, is imminent. An age-friendly Queensland will make Queensland, I believe, the most age-friendly state in Australia—a place where older people are connected to services and the people who matter to them, where they can access first-class frontline services where they need them, and where they are celebrated for their contribution to this great state including the valuable work they do as carers, workers, volunteers and community leaders.

In developing the strategy we have listened to the views of Queensland seniors. We heard that personal safety, accessing health care, living independently, participating in community events and staying connected to friends and family are vitally important to them. We have recognised this by investing in a range of organisations across the state addressing loneliness and social isolation.

A couple of weeks ago I visited the 60 and Better Program in Rockhampton and caught up with its manager, Anita, whom I had met before. Anita had some really great stories to tell about what her older residents get up to in the program. The most heartwarming aspect is that sense of community that they feel. On the day that I visited there was a stream of oldies, and perhaps not-so oldies, coming through the door to play cards. It was highly competitive, I can tell you. I was taught a couple of very new games. Also, we know that this work is vitally important.

I visited the Older Mens Network in Toowoomba when I first became the minister. One of the things that the men around the table said to me was that their measure of success for the Older Mens Network was that they had not had one suicide in their organisation. I think that speaks to why these programs are so important and why our government continues to fund them. In terms of the strategy, we recognise that the work we are doing in this space is absolutely vital.

Actions under the strategy will be delivered not only through our department but as a whole-of-government effort. We recognise that across our government there is work happening to support seniors. As part of our commitment, we are investing significantly in those supports and services. That includes specific targeted \$1 billion in concessions for seniors in our community. Our

significant power rebates mean that most seniors will not pay for electricity at all this financial year. Any of us who have been talking to our seniors know how important that is to them. When I have been doorknocking my seniors, to have someone say to me that it now means they can turn on the heater at night I think speaks to why that cost-of-living measure is so important.

We have also allocated \$1.28 billion for the Community Safety Plan for Queensland, which includes helping seniors to secure their homes in Townsville, Mount Isa, Cairns, Toowoomba, Tablelands and Mareeba, which is in your electorate, member for Cook. We are investing \$4.3 million in 2024-25 to fund 42 social isolation services across Queensland. From 1 July 2023 to 31 March this year, these services have helped 65,501 older Queenslanders. We are also providing an additional \$2.5 million to this program that will provide enhanced services and supports. That means that we will be bringing the seniors social isolation program to around \$6.8 million annually. As I said, that is money worthwhile when you hear about some of the things we have been able to achieve with that.

We are also providing \$9 million ongoing to address elder abuse awareness and prevention supports. As part of this our government will invest \$7.7 million for seniors' legal and support services. Again, these are vital services across Queensland. I have had the opportunity to meet with some of those services and hear about some of the work they are doing to support seniors with financial and legal issues. Particularly now that cost of living is an issue older Queenslanders are being pressured—sometimes by their own family members—to do things like hand over their house and those kinds of things. To have legal services available—which are free—within our community for our older Queenslanders is vital. We will continue to do all we can because we value our older Queenslanders and the ongoing contribution they make. I look forward to releasing that seniors strategy very soon.

Ms LUI: Minister, as identified on page 5 of the SDS, what has the government achieved from its program of seniors events and expos and how much has the program cost?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. As I indicated, we value the contribution and experience of Queensland seniors and will support them in every way we can. Our Seniors Expos and Senior Savings Pop-Ups ensure older Queenslanders have access to information about concessions and rebates to address cost-of-living pressures. They also provide key information about community services and safety at home, when they are out and about or online. These events also connect older people from all backgrounds with each other, creating opportunities for new friendships and expanding their networks.

In 2023-24 the Miles government invested \$150,000 for Seniors Expos and Senior Savings Pop-Ups across 11 locations, with the most recent in Surfers Paradise—which I understand the shadow appeared at and enjoyed—and Townsville earlier this month. We have also delivered 19 Senior Savings Pop-Ups. We do those mainly around shopping centres, for example, around Gympie, Caboolture, Western Queensland and Logan. These all provide great opportunities for face-to-face conversations, particularly around cost of living and other supports available. During 2023-24, 10,550 older Queenslanders attended a Seniors Expo or a Senior Savings Pop-Up. I have attended a few of these myself, and I can tell you the energy is amazing. Our seniors want to know what our government is doing to help them. They want to know they are entitled to a free pair of glasses every second year. They want to know about discounts for fishing permits and boat registrations. They are really quite informative and we look forward to delivering even more.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, as outlined by the Treasurer on pages 2 to 4 of Budget Paper 1, how do the Queensland government's cards, concessions and rebate schemes benefit seniors and other vulnerable Queenslanders on low and fixed incomes?

CHAIR: Minister, you have about three minutes.

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. We recognise how important this is, particularly at this time. To ensure they are connected, cared for and celebrated, the Miles government has increased cost-of-living concessions and rebates by 31 per cent this financial year. That is total of \$1.046 billion in cost-of-living concessions and rebates for our seniors. It includes: reduced vehicle registration costs for 12 months; 50-cent fares on public transport, which will begin 5 August; free spectacles every two years; access to free dental care at public clinics and hospitals; and the electricity rebate of up to \$1,672 so most seniors will not pay for electricity. All of these concessions and rebates have been made possible by our progressive coal royalties.

I want to thank the shadow minister for his public support of these programs. For the benefit of the committee, I seek leave to table a social media post by the shadow minister for seniors on 10 July 2024.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mrs MULLEN: The shadow minister offered his support for our concessions and rebates, our \$1.046 billion. I do hope the opposition will explain to Queenslanders before the October election how they will pay for these concessions if they do not support our progressive coal royalties. We will also be investing \$140 million over five years for the Home Assist Secure service, which provides critical home maintenance for seniors. We are investing a further \$22.3 million under the Community Safety Plan, extending the Helping Seniors Secure Their Homes trial; increasing funding to seniors isolation services and elder abuse prevention; and funding Seniors Month with grants.

CHAIR: Time has expired. Before we turn to the next session, I noted a number of outstanding questions. Do you have answers for the committee to those questions or do you intend to take those questions on notice?

Mrs MULLEN: We do have answers to some of those questions.

Ms Mulkerin: As at 30 June AS&RS provided employment for 1,389 frontline and frontline support staff. Chair, 1,313 staff are working directly in our service centres, respite centres, units and houses, which includes 1,178 direct care staff and 135 staff in administrative, supervisory and management positions. The remaining 76 staff work with regionally-based directors and other teams. AS&RS has two contractors based in the corporate office. In relation to the question about the average total cost per AS&RS client, based on 568 participants the average cost per client direct, indirect and corporate overhead costs, is \$312,749 per STA and SIL clients.

In relation to the member's question about the number of children in care who had been referred to NDIS: we have 4,424 children and young people subject to ongoing child protection referred to NDIS.

CHAIR: There was also a question on disability worker screening, how many applications more than 28 days.

Ms Mulkerin: I do not have that as yet.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister and officials. We now close this session on the portfolio area of seniors and disability services and move straight to the portfolio area of multicultural affairs. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of multicultural affairs open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Mr BENNETT: I table a departmental document for multicultural grants for distribution. There are 10 copies.

CHAIR: The member does not have to seek leave for that.

Mr LANGBROEK: I will wait until you get it, Minister, before I ask anything. It is not a contentious piece of paper, but my questions will be more relevant if they are able to see the application form.

CHAIR: That is fine, member; no problem.

Mr LANGBROEK: I refer to the grant application form for the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland program. Minister, are you aware that new sections on the events grants form are quite confusing for culturally and linguistically diverse applicants, who are worried they may not be successful?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. What I will say is that this is an issue that has been raised with me by our multicultural groups—that they do find the application process at times confusing but also when English is not their first language. That is something that our department is working on to refine. One of the ways we are going to be doing that is to allow applicants to put in applications in their own language going forward. We believe that will allow them to be able to put in quality applications where perhaps at the moment that is an issue for those applicants.

In relation to your specific question, I had not seen the updated application form but we will of course take feedback on whether the applications are too confusing for some of our applicants. At the same time, as I indicated, we are trying to do all sorts of things to try to make it easier for applicants, including being able to provide in the future applications in language.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is going to the specifics. Minister, I draw your attention to page 3 of the tabled document where I have highlighted two issues at the bottom of that page. The first is where it says 'gender inequality', and the second is at the tail end of the sentence where it asks about gender inequality and it says 'or you think this may occur as a side-benefit to your event'—in other words, improving opportunities for people as women and girls. The issue is that confusing grammatical structure where it is not about gender equality but rather gender inequality. Also, it is asking them for something that would be quite confusing to anyone who speaks a language other than English.

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you for raising this and bringing it to my attention. I would be happy to receive feedback from any organisation that has some specific concerns or would like to see some of these revised. When I read it, it kind of does make sense to me but at the same time I appreciate it could be confusing for those where English may not be their first language. I am very happy to look at how we refine that in light of our forward program of events funding and also project funding.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, the next issue is on the bottom of the fourth page. I have again highlighted two bits: 'your outcomes' and 'timeframe'. While I know this has been happening for a long time, applications have to be done by 30 June 2024, for example, for a program that will not happen until 2025. Groups are concerned that they are being asked about what the outcomes are going to be and they are talking about something that is more than a year hence often, and they are worried they are going to miss out as a result. Can you take that on board as well?

Mrs MULLEN: Again, that is a matter we are happy to take on board in terms of any future application forms and also in terms of the timeframes for our programs. As you know, we run two streams of funding. We run the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland events stream but we also have a projects stream. We are taking feedback on both of those and we are very happy to do so going forward around both the timing and the application forms.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, has the department identified a bias towards male-dominated events? I am asking in terms of the highlighted point about 'gender inequality'.

Mrs MULLEN: I imagine that we would like to ensure that events are inclusive of all people, male and female. I will defer to our Multicultural Affairs Queensland executive director to speak to potentially why that was included in the application form.

Mr Briscoe: What I can confirm is that we provide as much assistance as we possibly can to people who want to inquire about the process for making applications and we can assist people to an extent in making those applications. As the minister mentioned, applications can also now be made in language and that will be for events and projects.

I have not personally identified any bias one way or the other, although I do know that for some events it is difficult for women to participate. Obviously we would want to encourage as much unbiased contributions and participation as possible in all events.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, does the new question section to do with gender inequality mean that preference will be given to applications that are weighted to women and girls?

Mrs MULLEN: I do not believe that would be the intent. Again, as Mr Briscoe has outlined, we want to ensure that all of the events are as inclusive as possible. We know that within particular cultural groups that are fairly male dominated there are not the opportunities for women to participate in those. My sense is that it is about broadening inclusion rather than making it smaller in a sense in terms of your question.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, my next question is to do with the answer to prehearing question on notice No. 7 which is about the issues in the Middle East. What interaction has the minister had personally with affected communities since 7 October?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. I certainly recognise that Queenslanders feel deeply for those affected by the situation in the Middle East. On becoming the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I prioritised meetings with senior leaders from both our Queensland Jewish and Muslim communities on behalf of the Queensland government. These engagements continue because it is vitally important that we keep lines of support and dialogue open. I have had conversations as recently as yesterday with some of the community leaders. I continue to check in with them in terms of the welfare of their communities. The feelings at the moment are very deep and very traumatic for many people affected by what is happening in the Middle East.

One of the issues for us is that some communities have chosen to disengage with government based on I guess the federal government's position when it comes to the Middle East. What I would say is that I have been very respectful of that. I have not pushed specifically with those communities. What I have also found is communities very willing to engage. A wonderful example of that would be the Islamic Women's Association where I have had the opportunity to engage with that community. I have also recently visited the Slacks Creek Mosque where I was welcomed into the mosque. Interestingly, the most pressing issue for the members of that mosque was what was happening in Bangladesh at the moment with the civil unrest occurring there.

I continue to engage with the Jewish Board of Deputies. In fact I visited the Holocaust Museum only yesterday because I had not had the opportunity to visit the Holocaust Museum. I spent some time with Jason Steinberg and one of the holocaust survivors, which was deeply moving for me to be able

to do that. I engage with organisations such as Multicultural Australia and QPASST who are doing important work when it comes to trauma and some of our refugees who are coming over from these conflict zones and particularly working with children in relation to that. I continue to engage respectfully and appropriately with all of those groups, recognising what a challenging time it is for those communities at this time.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is about the same answer in prehearing question on notice No. 7 in which the minister refers to the motion we had in the parliament on 6 March. The amendment moved by the minister called for 'an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the release of all hostages'. Minister, doesn't that motion calling for a ceasefire lead to the Queensland government ipso facto supporting Hamas as the government of Palestine?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. The motion that was moved and supported in the Queensland parliament is the position of the federal government, in fact. It does not speak, I believe, to supporting one group over another. It simply calls for a ceasefire and for, if you read further, 'the provision of rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian relief'. It also speaks to 'a negotiated political solution to achieve lasting peace and security' and also speaks to 'a two-state solution, including the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, where Palestinians and Israelis live side by side in peace, security and dignity within internationally recognised borders'. Member, whilst you have picked up part (a) of paragraph 3 of that motion, when you read further it is very clear that Queensland joins with our federal government in calling for all of those things.

Mr LANGBROEK: Has the minister had any advice from the police minister about regular pro-Palestinian rallies occurring on the streets of Surfers Paradise and in Cavill Avenue mall? It has been happening for a number of months. I am wondering if you have had any advice about it.

Mrs MULLEN: I have not had any specific advice in relation to that particular matter. We, of course, do receive briefings now and then in relation to activities that are occurring across Queensland but not specific to the Gold Coast.

Mr LANGBROEK: Has the minister had any communications with the Turkish Honorary Consul following the recent scooter fatality in Surfers Paradise?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. No, I have not had any direct engagement with the Turkish ambassador but would always welcome an opportunity to do so. I do not think Multicultural Affairs Queensland has at this time either. Again, many of these matters usually will come through our federal government rather than me as the Minister for Multicultural Affairs in Queensland. Where there is a direct request for me to meet, of course I would make myself available, as I did recently with our Bangladesh Association in Brisbane, which asked me to attend a candlelight vigil in relation to some of the matters that are occurring in Bangladesh at the moment. I am always open to those if those opportunities arise.

Mr LANGBROEK: Will the minister provide a line item breakdown of the \$21 million for multicultural affairs in the 2024-25 budget?

Mrs MULLEN: I may just ask the director-general to see if we have that information on hand for you.

CHAIR: That is a substantial question.

Ms Mulkerin: Could I seek some guidance about the breakdown you are looking for particularly?

Mr LANGBROEK: It says it is \$21 million over four years, I think. It would be broken down into Celebrating Multicultural, QPASTT—basically itemising the \$21 million over four years, please.

Ms Mulkerin: That is a very detailed question.

Mr LANGBROEK: And I do not expect you to be able to answer it here. I am happy to have it taken on notice, if it is appropriate.

CHAIR: Minister?

Ms Mulkerin: We can do a year breakdown.

Mrs MULLEN: What I can share with you is that we are spending \$4.8 million to boost our Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program and \$1 million for the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma to expand their supports for children and young people. We continue with \$3 million for our Celebrating Multicultural Queensland program. They are just some of the figures we have been able to provide you, but we would have to come back to you with some further detail if required.

Mr LANGBROEK: I see that that is in the answer to prehearing question on notice No. 7 as well.

CHAIR: You have around a minute left, member.

Mr LANGBROEK: In that case, Minister, can I ask you about a particular demand that has been given to me. It is titled 'A Charter of Demands from the Indian Council of Australia Queensland Inc.' and is asking for them to be recognised as a peak umbrella body of people of Indian origin. I am wondering if you have had any similar demands and what the views of the department are about peak bodies, especially of the diverse multicultural groups that we all have.

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you, member. As you would know, within our multicultural communities everyone wants to be a peak body. Certainly, we work across a number of organisations. Obviously, we have the Federation of Indian Communities, FICQ, who also seek to represent their bodies. When we talk about peaks, I think it is really important to recognise that the Queensland government funds only one peak in Queensland and that is the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, ECCQ. That is our one peak body. Organisations can call themselves a peak. What I would say is that we are always very happy to engage with any group. As you know, I attended an event at Roma Street Parkland with the Indian Council only earlier this year and am always very happy to hear from them in terms of their interests and some of the issues that are important to them. Again, I would reiterate that we do not recognise peaks, per se, except for ECCQ as the peak for multicultural communities.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I now turn to the member for South Brisbane for questions.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, my question relates to the standing offer arrangements for language service providers. Can you outline the process and criteria used to review the quality of contracted service providers?

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you for that question. It is actually not through my department; it is through Queensland Health. They manage that process.

Dr MacMAHON: Thank you. Minister, the answer to prehearing question on notice No. 7 states—

Multicultural Affairs Queensland works closely with communities affected by international conflicts, including the Middle East, Ukraine, Eritrea, Rwanda and India.

Can you specify what countries in the region of the Middle East this applies to?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. I may ask Wayne to provide some more information on the work they are doing. As you go around our communities, it is interesting just how embedded Multicultural Affairs Queensland is—the advice and the support they provide to me in terms of their insights—because they are very much a trusted source within our multicultural communities. I do want to acknowledge that work they are doing. It is absolutely vital. I will ask Wayne to go into a little bit more detail about the specific communities we are working with.

Mr Briscoe: It very much depends on what is happening at a particular moment. Currently, particularly in relation to the current crisis in the Middle East, we are working very closely with our Palestinian community and our broader Muslim community but also with our Jewish community and their links to Israel. The support we have managed to provide from a state government level is available pretty much to anyone escaping those conflicts, but the main communities are the broader Muslim community and the Jewish community in relation to the Middle East at the moment. As for whether that extends to Lebanese people in the future, we will just have to see what happens over the next little while.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, I am keen to know what specific support is provided to people fleeing Gaza.

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. Obviously, we are seeing a number of refugees and settlers from that region. Through the 2024-25 budget the Queensland government has recognised that, and we are investing an additional \$4.8 million over two years to support the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program. That money will go towards vital supports in terms of people who are arriving. What we are finding is that we are having to step up at this time as a Queensland government, but this funding will provide access to free health care and access to fee-free education at Queensland state schools. We also work with a number of organisations specifically, such as Multicultural Australia and QPASTT, to continue to support Palestinian refugees as they come here to Australia for safe passage.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. With that I give the call to the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the SDS, could you provide an update on the Queensland Multicultural Action Plan?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. I am pleased to advise that the fourth Multicultural Action Plan 2024-25 to 2026-27 has been prepared in consultation with relevant government agencies. The Multicultural Advisory Council was consulted regarding the Multicultural Action Plan in March of this year, and the insights from those members have been extremely valuable. The plan will build on important work achieved to date and we will be releasing the plan during Multicultural Queensland Month, which kicks off tomorrow.

Previous action plans were developed to progress outcomes in the *Queensland Multicultural Policy: our story, our future*. I am pleased to say there are 29 agencies that are progressing actions under the previous action plan to achieve the policy outcomes of a culturally responsive government which is inclusive, harmonious, unites communities and unlocks economic opportunity. All agencies with actions have published a report on the progress of their activities for 2022-23.

Under the previous Multicultural Action Plan, significant outcomes have been achieved by Queensland government agencies. For example, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training expanded their Diverse Queensland Workforce program. One-stop shops in Brisbane, Logan, Toowoomba, the Gold and Sunshine coasts, Ipswich, Townsville, Rockhampton and Cairns are providing a range of client-centred employment and training services.

Queensland Health launched a report exploring the health of culturally and linguistically diverse populations in Queensland. This report analysed data to identify country-level, overseas born communities who experience high rates of potentially preventable hospitalisations than the Australian-born population. The findings are being used to inform the development of a multicultural health action plan to improve the health of Queensland's culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and the Miles government will continue to support a vibrant, inclusive, diverse Queensland. I look forward to releasing our next Multicultural Action Plan very soon.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the SDS, what measures are included in the budget to strengthen community cohesion in Queensland?

CHAIR: Minister, you have around two minutes.

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you, member. The Miles government continues to promote social cohesion. As I mentioned earlier, the government recognises the significance of this issue and has invested an additional \$5.8 million to support the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance program and the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma. Of this amount, \$4.8 million will go to ASRA to expand the vital support it provides to some of our most vulnerable residents. They include people arriving from overseas conflict zones who are not immediately entitled to support from the Commonwealth government. Through this funding and through the responsiveness of state agencies, we have, for example, as I have mentioned today, been able to provide much needed support to people arriving from the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

I do want to speak, though, to the \$1 million for QPASTT who continue their significant work in schools and support our students from refugee backgrounds to provide expert advice to school staff on how those young people are supported. I was speaking to Liz Gordon, one of the co-CEOs, only yesterday, and she said that that extra support will help her organisation provide support for children, young people and caregivers to prevent further trauma and address ongoing distress caused by global conflicts. Of course, our government will continue to fund, through \$3 million annually, grant programs for multicultural events and projects, fostering community cohesion at a grassroots community level across the state.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We have now reached the end of the time allocated. I do note that there may be two outstanding questions.

Mrs MULLEN: I will ask the director-general to respond.

Ms Mulkerin: In relation to the question by the member for Surfers Paradise about the number of disability worker screening checks that have taken more than 28 days to complete, as at 30 June 2024, there were 2,168 applications on hand that were more than 28 days old. In fact, since 2021, around five per cent of all applications take more than 30 days to finalise.

In relation to the question about the further breakdown of children in care, as at 30 June 2024, there were 2,020 non-Indigenous children subject to ongoing intervention with NDIS support plans and 1,533 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children—that was the further breakdown of that number with an NDIS support plan.

In relation to the member's questions about line items for MAQ, we will need to take that on notice. Then I think there was one outstanding question from the first session from the member for Whitsunday asking about the number of children aged under six months. That number is very small and it would actually identify those children specifically, so I am unable to make that number available publicly.

CHAIR: Thank you. That question will be taken on notice?

Ms Mulkerin: With the minister's agreement.

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you.

CHAIR: The committee has resolved that the answers to questions taken on notice must be provided to the committee secretariat by 5 o'clock on Thursday, 1 August. We have now reached to the end of the time allocated to examine the proposed expenditure for child safety, seniors and disability and multicultural affairs portfolio areas. You can confirm the exact wording of any questions taken on notice in the proof transcript of this session of the hearing which will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within approximately two hours, or by watching the archive broadcast. Thank you minister, director-general, officials and departmental officers for your attendance. I will give you a moment to close, Minister.

Mrs MULLEN: Thank you, Chair. I want to thank you and the hardworking committee members. Estimates is a challenging but rewarding part of our democratic process, and I am pleased to take part for the first time as a minister. I would like to thank director-general Deirdre Mulkerin, the department's executive team—Melinda, Shauna and Katrina from the office of the director-general—and all departmental staff who have made such a valuable contribution to this process. I want to also thank my ministerial staff for their support and work. I also want to acknowledge the work of all our staff and volunteers across the portfolios of child safety, seniors and disability services and multicultural affairs. Queensland would be a very different state to live in without the heart, soul and commitment you bring to your jobs every single day. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you. With that, the committee will adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 4.45 pm.

Proceedings suspended from 4.17 pm to 4.45 pm.

ESTIMATES—COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE— TOURISM; SPORT

In Attendance

Hon. MP Healy, Minister for Tourism and Sport

Ms K Adams, Chief of Staff

Department of Tourism and Sport

Mr A Hopper, Director-General

Mr A Sly, Deputy Director-General, Sport and Recreation


Mr C Anderson, Deputy Director-General, Tourism

Tourism and Events Queensland

Ms P O'Callaghan, Chief Executive Officer

Stadiums Queensland

Mr T Harris, Chief Executive Officer

 **CHAIR:** Good afternoon. We will now resume proceedings. For the benefit of those who have just joined us, I Adrian Tantari, the member for Hervey Bay and chair of the committee. The other members of the committee are: Mr Stephen Bennett, the member for Burnett and deputy chair; Mr Michael Berkman, the member for Maiwar; Dr Mark Robinson, the member for Odgeroo; Ms Cynthia Lui, the member for Cook; and Mr Rob Skelton, the member for Nicklin. I also acknowledge at the table Mr David Crisafulli, the member for Broadwater and Leader of the Opposition. The committee is joined by other members who have been granted leave to attend and ask questions at the hearing today.

I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at the chair's discretion or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasters of proceedings are available from the secretariat. Staff who are assisting our witnesses today are permitted to use personal electronic devices in the chamber. I ask all present to ensure phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode or turned off if not in use. I also remind everyone that food and drink are not permitted in the chamber.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2024 for the portfolio area of tourism until 6.15. We will then adjourn for a short break until 6.30 before examining the portfolio area of sport until 8.00 pm. I remind honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can only be raised during the times that are specified for the area, as was agreed by the House. I refer members to the program set by the House that is available throughout the chamber and on the committee's webpage. I also remind everybody that these proceedings are subject to the standing orders and rules of the Legislative Assembly.

In respect of government owned corporations and statutory bodies, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question the committee determines will assist it in its examination of the relevant Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided. On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Minister for Tourism and Sport, the director-general, officials, departmental officers and members of the public.

For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials and advisers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question that is referred to them by the minister or director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of tourism 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 HEALY: I thank the chair and the committee for the opportunity to make a brief opening statement. In the first budget of the new Miles government, we are doing what matters for Queensland—delivering the biggest cost-of-living relief in Queensland’s history. By making multinational mining companies pay their fair share we are: taking \$1,000 off Queenslanders’ power bills; slashing all public transport fares to 50 cents from 5 August; and reducing rego bills by 20 per cent.

In my portfolio responsibilities as the Minister for Tourism and Sport, we are working to support all Queenslanders to live a healthier and a more active lifestyle through participating in sport whether at community, organised or elite level. A significant focus for this budget is to provide support for families to participate in sport or active recreation activities in the light of the current cost-of-living pressures. In the 2024-25 financial year, \$60 million will be provided to expand the FairPlay vouchers program, making every Queenslanders from five to 17 years eligible for a voucher. With up to 300,000 vouchers available—an increase from 50,000—the value of each voucher is also increasing from \$150 to \$200 to help reduce the cost of sport memberships, registrations and participation fees for families at registered clubs across the state.

An additional \$9.5 million has been allocated under the Minor Infrastructure Program for shovel-ready community sport infrastructure. There is a further \$3 million for the successful Youth Development Partnership Fund aimed at improving youth crime prevention in association with the Queensland Police Service. The ActiveKIT, Active Clubs and Emerging Athlete Pathways program is receiving a further \$5.5 million in funding.

The Queensland government is committed to ensuring elite Queensland athletes in Olympic and Paralympic sport receive the support they need to shine on the world stage. A four-year investment of \$72 million will continue the delivery of the Queensland Academy of Sport’s 2032 High Performance Strategy and enable the Queensland Academy of Sport, or QAS, to retain more than 100 high-performance practitioners, giving over 500 QAS supported athletes access to premium facilities and the latest in sports technology as we get closer to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Tourism and Events Queensland’s base funding will continue to be supported with \$125 million in 2024-25, as the Queensland government backs its lead marketing agency to drive demand. Working with industry, \$30 million Growing Future Tourism will deliver major, new and enhanced tourism infrastructure or experiences with funding between \$1 million and \$4 million on a matched contribution basis. Visitors to regional Queensland will enjoy new and enhanced tourism infrastructure and experiences across the state with the support of the \$10 million Building Bush Tourism Fund. First Nations tourism gets a boost with a \$3 million investment, which is matched by the Australian government—supporting the sector to deliver the \$6 million Strategic Indigenous Tourism Projects initiative in Queensland.

The initiative focuses on increasing the supply of First Nations tourism experiences with a focus on Brisbane 2032. This is a budget which relieves pressure now as well as creating opportunity and prosperity for the future. I would also like to take this opportunity to flag that tonight I will announce further support packages for the tourism operators and community sport clubs affected by Cyclone Jasper. The unique impacts of this cyclone event have seen prolonged isolation for many operators which have needed prolonged support from the federal and state governments. I welcome any questions from your members or guests that they may have.

CHAIR: I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: Thank you. I will hand over to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My first question is to the director-general. Director-General, this is the fourth estimates in a row that I have raised delays and cost blowouts for the Wangetti Trail. Can you explain why there was a \$7 million underspend last financial year?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. In terms of the financials related to Wangetti, I will check my notes but I believe that relates to timing of activities and the subsequent alignment of likely expenditure based on the capital program.

Mr CRISAFULLI: That has been a consistent theme for the last four years. I will reveal what came through in answer to a question on notice. It says that the completion date for the project has now been pushed back another six months, from June 2026 to December 2026. It was originally due to open in financial year 2022-23. Given the previous delays and despite the previous assurances, how can North Queenslanders have any confidence that this target will be met?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. The simple reality is we are building in the Wet Tropics and, unsurprisingly, weather events such as the recent cyclone do have an impact on construction timing. Importantly, construction is underway, and so we will continue to progress that activity.

Mr CRISAFULLI: This one is to the minister. At last year's estimates I raised an underspend of \$10 million. The year before that it was close to \$9 million. The year before that it was \$6 million. I asked what would be different in 2023-24 and the committee was assured it would be different because work was underway. This \$7 million underspend shows nothing has changed. Cost blowouts, time delays—is the Wangetti Trail symbolic of a government that just cannot deliver ecotourism for Queensland?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. The Wangetti Trail is an absolute game changer. It is a game-changing ecotourism offering for Far North Queensland. It is tapping into one of the fastest growing tourism sectors of the world and will deliver 150 local jobs—construction and operation—along with sustainable long-term business opportunities for locals, the traditional owners and their future generations.

The project is the most technologically intense and longest trail development in Queensland spanning—and this might give the member and others a bit of an indication of the complexity of it—a World Heritage area, three national parks, two local government areas, three separate native title claims as well as freehold and reserves held in trust. We are expected to complete the first stage of the project from Palm Cove to Ellis Beach by the end of next month, so we are well and truly underway.

I take the member's comments; it has been a horrendously slow start and it has been complex. There are a wide range of impacting factors, natural and some not so natural. The key thing about this is it is estimated that the Wangetti Trail will attract thousands of new visitors to our region and it is said to inject over \$390 million. I agree it has taken a long time, but we are committed to it. What I would like to know from the member is: we are building it; will you commit to it?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chair, I know the minister is new at this, but we get to ask you the questions, Minister.

CHAIR: Member—

Mr CRISAFULLI: We are working hard to ensure that is not the case in the future, I assure you.

CHAIR: Member, we do not need a statement. Please ask your next question.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, I am going to go back to you. Can you explain the reason for the \$3.4 million, or 11 per cent, reduction in the property, plant and equipment budget relating to Wangetti this financial year?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. I may just have to spend a bit of time getting the detail on that, but I am happy to come back with an answer, certainly by the end of the session.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you very much. The most important thing for me would be that there are no scope changes. I am not sure if it relates to things that may have left the balance sheet to be transferred over, but it is scope changes that I specifically would like an answer about.

Mr Hopper: I can confirm that we are committed to building a 94-kilometre trail with no scope change.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I understand that, but I would like to know what the underspend relates to.

Mr BENNETT: The minister perhaps could take that on notice.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, are you happy to take that on notice?

Mr HEALY: We will get back to you before the end of the session.

Mr CRISAFULLI: That is great. I have a further question to the director-general. Could you please provide an outline of the works that will be completed this financial year? I am basically after a percentage of the total length of the project that will be done by the end of 2024-25? What will be open for use by the public?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. At this stage what we are working towards—and the minister touched on it—is this calendar year we will see the first roughly eight kilometres of the trail open and operating between Palm Cove and Ellis Beach. We are still finalising design and alignment for subsequent stages, so at this time making a commitment on that would be misleading. I can guarantee you that in relation to the 7.8 kilometres, we are working towards that timing for the end of this calendar year.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, what about the ecotourism operator process? Will that be undertaken in the 2024-25 financial year? That was the commitment last year.

Mr Hopper: As it relates to the trail?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Yes.

Mr Hopper: If you are talking to the commercial operations on the trail, part of our activities in this financial year is to determine the best model under which to deliver that. Again, as the member would appreciate, we will need substantial parts of the trail complete to make it commercially viable for an operator. Certainly our intention is to devise the model and be ready to keep working through that as we continue to build the trail.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, will that model and/or the operator process be done in this financial year?

Mr Hopper: Definitely the model will be and certainly the engagement with operators. Whether we are out to market confirmed in this financial year, it is too early to say because we need to make sure that what we are producing meets the market needs and the market can respond to it. Certainly the model will be developed, yes.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, at last year's estimates hearing we were told that the completion of the Indigenous land use agreements was imminent. Have they all been finalised?

Mr Hopper: Certainly for the stages we are currently working on, yes. However, as the minister discussed, there are three different Indigenous land use agreements that will be required. As we work through the planning of each of the stages, that work will be undertaken.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, does that differ from last year's commitment? Was last year's commitment to have all of the Indigenous land use agreements finalised?

Mr Hopper: I would have to check the record, member, but certainly we needed to complete one Indigenous land use agreement to commence that construction, which we have done. As we finalise design and alignment, that will allow for the ILUA processes for the remaining two to be completed.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you, Director-General. Minister, I refer to Labor's election commitment to support the Whitsunday Skyway project. This project was announced four years ago. Why has construction not started?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I say from the outset that I am very aware of this project and those who are promoting it and I am also very supportive of it, as is the government that I am very proud to be a part of. The Whitsunday Skyway project proposed by Australian Adventure Tourism Group Ltd plans to provide a cableway, an interpretive centre, hiking and cycling tracks located adjacent to and within the Conway National Park overlooking Airlie Beach. The Queensland government has worked with the proponent to progressing it, including committing \$1 million towards purchasing offset lands should it proceed.

Subject to the Australian Adventure Tourism Group obtaining all required environmental approvals and meeting the exclusive transaction requirements, the state will consider supporting the appropriate tenure pathway to enable the delivery of the Whitsunday Skyway. The referral of the Australian Adventure Tourism Group's proposal to the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water under the environment protection and biodiversity act 1999 is the first step in the process to seek statutory approvals. On 16 May last year the Commonwealth decided the project is a controlled action under the environment protection and biodiversity act and the project is currently undergoing assessment under that act. I understand the proponent has provided information to the Commonwealth for their consideration. Once that process is concluded, the proponent can take the necessary steps. This is a private sector proposal on public land and we have always said it has to obtain the necessary approvals to proceed. We have a duty to the people of Queensland to ensure that that occurs and we have worked in good faith, and continue to work in good faith, with the proponent.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, we know all that. My question is: why has the project not even started? Four years ago there was an announcement, and that was not the first time the government had made that announcement. I think that goes back a few years before that. Who does the issue relate to? Is it the operator's issue? Is it a hold-up with government? What is the issue that is stopping this from starting?

Mr HEALY: The commitment that the Queensland government has given is that there is money available once the necessary approvals have been achieved and I understand that it is the federal government and we are waiting to hear from them. That is what the proponent tells me.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, there is nothing else that the state government has outstanding that is preventing this project from coming to fruition?

Mr HEALY: At this stage I cannot confirm that is correct, but what I can report, having spoken to the proponent, is that they are waiting for the federal government. There would obviously need to be some state regulations that need to be met, but at the moment what is holding everything up, I have been told, is the federal government.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, is that your understanding or are there outstanding matters from the Queensland department of environment as well?

Mr Hopper: Thank you for the question, member. My understanding is that there are a range of steps to go through, but the stage that we are up to now is we are waiting for federal government approval—sorry, not we, the proponent is waiting for federal government approval.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, in terms of the state government's investment facilitation process, has that had anything to do with the failure of the project to advance?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I am not aware of that, as I have said. It would not come as a surprise that there would need to be no doubt some—actually, I will get the director-general to have a chat to you on that one.

Mr Hopper: Thank you, Minister. Member, I would just make the point that the project is in an exclusive transaction process with the department of state development, so some of your questions may actually be better answered by them because they guide the process. I just wanted to make that point.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I understand.

Mr HEALY: I just want to add that this is a vitally important project. When we look at the history of Airlie and the products and the age of some of those products there, this is something that we are very keen to see happen. As I have said, I have met with the proponent on a number of occasions, even to the point that when I secured this position I called a meeting and the proponent and her executives and others came in. We want to see this happen. It is good for tourism.

Mr CRISAFULLI: We are aware, Minister. We have seen that headline in the two last elections and nothing has happened, so we get it.

CHAIR: That is not a question. Just get to the question please, member, without the preambles.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thanks, Mr Chair. Director-General, in March it was announced that the Pomona King of the Mountain event, which has been held for over 40 years, was being cancelled because of roadblocks caused by the department of environment. Can the DG advise what steps the department took to ensure that the event could continue?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. Could you just repeat the name of the event please?

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is the King of the Mountain event in Pomona on the Sunshine Coast.

Mr Hopper: Thank you, member.

Mr HEALY: We will get some information on it.

Mr Hopper: Yes, I think we might need to because obviously that would be supported potentially through other areas, but I am not aware of anything at hand but happy to follow up.

Mr CRISAFULLI: What about the minister? Minister, did you have any discussions with Minister Linard about potential roadblocks with this?

Mr HEALY: I was not aware. It is the first time I have heard of it.

Mr CRISAFULLI: That is concerning. I will move on.

CHAIR: Do you want it on notice?

Mr CRISAFULLI: No. I am happy for that to stand on the record. It is a reasonably significant event for the Sunshine Coast. Minister, I refer to Labor's 2017 election commitment for \$25 million to be spent on the rejuvenation of Great Keppel Island. The estimates question on notice shows that up until 30 June this year less than \$5 million had been spent. Can the minister confirm that at this rate the project is on track to be completed by approximately 2052?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. The \$25 million Great Keppel Island rejuvenation fund is a 2017 election commitment, as you stated, which is delivering common user infrastructure priorities that will stimulate tourism development on the island. On 23 April this year the Department of State Development and Infrastructure released the Great Keppel Island concept master

plan 2024. The master plan provides a guide on how Great Keppel Island can be developed to rejuvenate its tourism offerings. The Great Keppel Island rejuvenation fund will be used to implement several common user infrastructure projects that were identified within the master plan.

The Great Keppel Island rejuvenation fund is in part committed with a funding agreement in place to support the Livingstone Shire Council to progress delivery of a sewerage treatment plant and public amenities. Technical analysis for potential maritime access is also being progressed through Maritime Safety Queensland. What we have delivered to date is that \$5.1 million has been transferred over for the sewerage treatment plant and amenities. In May we are expecting the maritime access investigation by MSQ and there is \$500,000 for a plan that they are doing for safety.

In terms of the gateway precinct, we are looking at a funding agreement to be negotiated with the Livingstone Shire Council. For boardwalks and walkways a \$4 million funding agreement is being negotiated once again by the council and for the wayfinding signage we have allocated \$250,000 in funding the agreement that is being negotiated once again with the council. Further collaboration between the Queensland government and the Livingstone Shire Council for delivery of a gateway project, signage and boardwalk is well and truly underway.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a few questions now for the director-general. Director-General, just for your reference, this relates to capital grants at page 100 of the Capital Statement. Can the director-general explain the reason for the underspend in the Binna Burra Lodge rebuild of \$12.3 million last year? That is comparing capital grants from 2023 to 2024.

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. I would hasten to add that that would be around a timing matter, but as I look to my notes here certainly there was the allocation provided. I am happy to come back but I think, as tends to occur in many of these capital programs, as funding is secured and applied as the proponents go forth to deliver if their timings start to move funding does not go if milestones are not met, but again I am happy to double-check that and come back to you.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, could you explain the reason for the underspend in the Minjerribah North Stradbroke Island futures program of \$1.7 million last year?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. I think to help with time I am happy to come back on that one as well.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Okay. There is an additional allocation in that project as well.

Mr Hopper: I am sorry, member: there are three projects outstanding that would be having a bearing on the timing of that money being expended.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Could you explain the reason for the \$3 million underspend in the activate ecotourism capital grants? Some \$7.2 million was to be spent but the actual spend was around \$4.2 million.

Mr Hopper: Timing of expenditure again, member.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The next one: 2023 was the Year of Accessible Tourism. We are into 2024-25 and only \$940,000 of the \$4.94 million Year of Accessible Tourism funding has been spent. Again, I refer to the capital grants statement of 2023-24 compared to 2024-25.

Mr Hopper: That program is a program that runs over two years.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Twenty per cent has been spent in the first year?

Mr Hopper: That is correct. Some of that will be related to grant programs that have milestone payments so payments will have started to be made.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Is that the way that it was originally mapped to flow—to spend 20 per cent in the first year and 80 per cent in the second?

Mr Hopper: No. Often with a lot of the programs the expected expenditure will vary once we enter into contracts. Grant recipients are expected to meet milestones. If they do not meet the milestones, the money is not unlocked.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The next one relates to tourism development expenses, page 6 of the SDS. Can the director-general provide an outline of what this program will deliver? I notice there was an underspend last financial year in the order of \$65 million or 36 per cent. Can the director-general explain the reason for that underspend?

Mr Hopper: I will seek some clarification, member. While we do, I can confirm that the Binna Burra matter is delays due to availability of contractors.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The next one, Mr Chairman: in last year's budget there was \$3 million to be spent equally over 2023-24 and 2024-25 on Great Barrier Reef marine infrastructure. Last year's spend was zero dollars. What happened there?

CHAIR: Is that to the director-general, member?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Yes, it is.

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. That matter relates to the timing of finalising agreements with the recipients.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The next one: the Growing Indigenous Tourism in Queensland Fund seems to have gone backwards. As of 20 June 2023, the spend was listed in last year's budget as \$5.322 million. This year's budget shows the spend, as of 30 June, at \$5.254 million. Can the director-general please explain the discrepancy in that expenditure?

Mr Hopper: We will have to come back to the member on that one.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a question to the minister. Minister, you have been minister for six months. Have you asked any of those questions of your director-general?

Mr HEALY: I have asked a number of questions of my director-general.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Any of those at all? Even one of them?

CHAIR: Member, you have asked the question. You do not badger the minister; you ask the question.

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I would like to let the member and everybody else know that I have regular engagement with my director-general on a range of issues, particularly on the performance of funding, and I speak to the industry. Where we have to make changes we make changes. I am quite sure, if you went through every budget, you would find something like you have. I am comfortable knowing that we will get some answers and we will get them back to you at the end of the day. We allocate this money to the industry and we make sure that the industry can get it. We need to see what the criteria is. We will get some information and we will get back to you. I have a range of discussions with my director-general and others in the department to ensure improvement of efficiencies.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the minister. Does the department have an issue with spending its money in the financial year that it has been allocated?

Mr HEALY: One of the things that the member might need to understand is that there is a process that we need to go through to ensure that the money is getting to those people who fulfil the right criteria. If the criteria is not appropriate, people come to me, and they do on a number of occasions, so we might have to make adjustments. There are a number of mitigating circumstances that impact. My goal is to get the money out. I have made that very clear to my staff. There will be some good reasons for that and we will get them and get back to you.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, which of the half a dozen projects that I have mentioned in relation to underspend had an 'unmitigated criteria'—or whatever words you used? Which projects do those weasel words relate to?

CHAIR: That is inappropriate. I will rule your question out of order if you continue to use language like that.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chairman, which of the projects that I have outlined, where there are serious underspends, pertain to the minister's comments as to why that would be an issue with that underspend?

Mr HEALY: Are you directing that to the chairman or to me, because you said 'Mr Chairman'.

Mr CRISAFULLI: To you, Minister.

Mr HEALY: I think the most important thing here is that we are having regular engagement on a wide range of issues in relation to key areas where we are not getting the money out the door quick enough. I have regular discussions on that. Thanks for the question.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the minister. Does the department, under your leadership, have an issue with approvals of projects to get them going and a steady flow of funding to ensure that they are delivered on the timeline that the government has outlined?

Mr HEALY: That is very much a goal and objective of ours. I must say that the grant recipients must meet the appropriate milestones for this money to get out the door. Sometimes that is not the case. As I said, we will get some information on those other matters and we will get back to you. My goal and objective is to ensure that we get the money out there as quick as we can.

Currently being administered by the Department of Tourism and Sport is \$1.6 million in the Tourism Recovery Assistance Grant, which provides up to \$50,000 for financial assistance to owners of medium and large operations. There is \$10 million in the tourism accessible assistance grants, which is financial assistance to owners of tourism operations that were closed to trading for a minimum of 14 days of up to half a million dollars. There is \$10 million for the Building Resilient Tourism Infrastructure, which provides between \$30,000 and \$250,000 for impacted tourism businesses to build resilience. There is \$10 million for the Building Bush Tourism Fund, which provides financial assistance to tourism operators, not-for-profit organisations and local governments. There is \$30 million for the growing tourism program. Funding of between \$1 million and \$4 million is available on a matched contribution basis over the two rounds of \$15 million. There is \$3 million for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Infrastructure Package of 2023. Three applicants each awarded \$1 million in funding are Hook Island, Long Island and Keswick Island for the development of marine infrastructure to connect visitors and residents.

There is \$8 million for Accessible Tourism Infrastructure Grants 2023, which support tourism businesses to improve tourism infrastructure and accessibility. Eleven projects have been funded \$1.1 million. The \$5 million Accessible Tourism Elevate Fund supports the tourism industry to enhance their accessible tourism experiences. In addition to that, the \$1 million Accessible Tourism Enablers Grant 2023 supports not-for-profit disability peak organisations to develop services for use by tourism businesses and five applicants so far have been awarded \$925,000.

I would like to remind the member and others who are listening that grant recipients must meet key criteria and milestones. Sometimes that money not getting out the door is because of the inability to meet those milestones.

CHAIR: I now give the call to the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Minister, in relation to page 8 of the Department of Tourism and Sport SDS and the reference to clean-up and repair after disaster events, can you provide an update on disaster funding support for tourism businesses following Cyclone Jasper?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I know that a lot of this took part in her electorate. I want to acknowledge the great work that she did representing her electorate during that disaster.

I am pleased to announce that Far North Queensland tourism businesses impacted by ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper last December will benefit from a further redirection of \$3.7 million in funding to support those operators who experienced extended isolation to market a springtime holiday in the tropics. We know of the unique challenges that were suffered as a result of that unprecedented event. We saw that it was not the damage to the products themselves but access to the destination. Roads were literally wiped out so this is vitally important. We have developed this as a result of a process of consultation with the tourism industry.

The funding is part of a \$29.15 million Tourism Recovery and Resilience Program jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements for tourism operators severely impacted as a result of ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper. Almost \$1 million of the redirected funding supports an additional 10 recipients for Building Resilient Tourism Infrastructure program now worth \$10.9 million, bringing the total number of funded projects up to 75.

A total of \$1.15 million has been redirected to the new Tourism Exceptional Assistance Grant—Extended Isolation program for businesses isolated and fully closed for trading for an extended period, enabling businesses to claim support for up to a further four months of isolation. I think that highlights just how much damage there was to these roads up there. We are trying to get them open as we quickly can but the isolation is still having an impact. There is no doubt about that.

Applications for these grants will open on 9 August for four weeks. Tourism Tropical North Queensland will receive \$1.5 million and co-invest an extra \$1 million to launch a \$2.5 million spring marketing campaign to encourage visitors to the Far North with discounted flights and holidays through Webjet, My Queensland and Expedia.

We have identified new areas of need and acted quickly, working hand in hand with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and the Australian government to redirect existing funds so they can go directly to these tourism operators who are most in need of them. Some tourism businesses are still suffering the effects of isolation more than six months after Tropical Cyclone Jasper hit. This funding of \$1.15 million to a new Tourism Exceptional Assistance Grant—Extended Isolation program will help them cover costs like creditors, wages and rent.

This is unprecedented in that the federal government has not given money to the state previously where people can pay wages with that money. It goes to show that this is what can happen when the industry comes to us. They made it very clear that the money out there is not accessible and it is harder to get. We have gone back to the federal government and we have had a good discussion, and we are now seeing this money being redirected. Another 10 businesses will now be able to receive resilience funding to get vital funds to rebuild stronger with flood resilient infrastructure.

The \$1.5 million for marketing will be critical for driving domestic visitation back to the Far North and gaining momentum in the next Christmas holiday season. Tourism Tropical North Queensland will launch the national campaign in spring to drive visitation across the low season through to May. This has always been a challenging period for the Far North and for our tourism operators up there. The grant program is part of more than \$156 million committed by the Australian and the Queensland governments to support the long-term recovery of communities impacted by ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper, which was in December 2023.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 16 of the Department of Tourism and Sport's Service Delivery Statements and the reference to TEQ delivering a 'bold and unique high-impact global marketing campaign', can the minister provide an update on the recent campaign?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. Last month Tourism and Events Queensland launched its biggest campaign in more than a decade—'Queensland is Bluey's world for real life', which is terrific. You only to have look around the world to see the popularity of this fantastic Queensland product. It is absolutely fantastic, and that is why we have jumped on board.

Building on the global phenomenon of *Bluey*, TEQ is encouraging visitors from around the world to come and experience the Queensland lifestyle and see what Bluey's world is really like. The partnership is a first between TEQ and BBC Studios and builds on the incredible popularity of *Bluey*, as I said earlier, to bring visitors to Bluey's home state of Queensland and to explore the immersive *Bluey's World* experience, set to open at Brisbane's Northshore on 7 November all going well.

The campaign sees tourism heavyweights offer exclusive deals, with the Qantas Group, Expedia, the Flight Centre Travel Group and Accor Group coming in behind it to convert global publicity into booking Queensland holidays. The major local and international publicity blitz is expected to reach tens of millions not only in Australia but also in New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Singapore. I note that these are all key source markets. They are some of the state's top international markets and countries where *Bluey* is also popular.

The campaign has performed strongly to date. Results from the first six weeks of the campaign showed a publicity value of \$8.3 million, an international reach of 62.5 million people and more than 300,000 leads to industry driven via website and digital advertising. In the first three weeks, Expedia reported more than 52,000 passengers booking 51,600 room nights and Qantas reported a 50 per cent increase in classic flight reward redemptions.

In addition, to complement the Bluey campaign, TEQ is also leading the delivery of a new tourism campaign called 'Great Things Are Happening Here', which was launched on Sunday on World Nature Conservation Day. The \$2.5 million campaign aims to raise awareness, encourage visitors and educate about the measures being taken to protect and preserve our vitally important reef, highlighting that the Great Barrier Reef is the best managed reef in the world.

TEQ being able to launch its biggest campaigns in a decades is only possible because last year we provided \$125 million base funding guarantee for TEQ for four years. A multiyear funding guarantee recognises the importance of tourism as an industry. It supports our regions and sustains, most importantly, Queensland jobs. It also provides more security and the ability to forward plan to deliver high-impact global marketing campaigns which drive outcomes in line with the Towards Tourism 2032 strategy, a strategy which we developed in strong consultation with the industry.

This is in contrast to the LNP. When they were in government they cut 35 jobs and \$188 million from the Tourism and Events Queensland's budget. Their lack of investment in this sector severely limited Tourism and Events Queensland's ability to plan, market and, most importantly, deliver events supporting the tourism industry.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 16 of the Department of Tourism and Sport's Service Delivery Statements and the reference to Tourism and Events Queensland, TEQ, could you provide an update on the TEQ Board?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I am very pleased to announce that Queensland's tourism marketing agency, Tourism and Events Queensland, will be led by a new 10-member board for the next three years. Some years back I had the privilege of sitting on that board. It is a demanding role, but I am very pleased that the people we have on that board will be well equipped to face the challenges as we increase the work on TEQ leading up to the Olympics.

Leading advocate for ecotourism and First Nations tourism Grant Hunt AM will continue as chair, steering the board with a wealth of experience and knowledge. Managing Director of Nine Queensland, Kylie Blucher, has also been reappointed to take up the position of deputy chair. She has extensive experience in media and marketing and has served on numerous boards in the events and arts sector. This is a key area of TEQ. Cairns-based and very accomplished tourism marketing professional Mr Brian Hennessy continues his role as a board member, bringing experience from his previous roles including Qantas, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park and Sunlover Reef Cruises. The Chief Executive Officer of Trade and Investment Queensland, Justin McGowan, and the Director-General of the Department of Tourism and Sport, Mr Hopper, are also reappointed to their positions.

The new appointments to the Tourism and Events Queensland Board include: Gert-Jan de Graaff, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Brisbane Airport Corporation. We have always had somebody with aviation experience because it is a fundamental part of the tourism component. As the CEO, he brings more than 25 years experience of leadership in roles at major airports from around the world. Also appointed are: Karen Bolinger, an Australian visitor economy specialist and an experienced chief executive officer; Stephanie Parkin, an Indigenous law expert and Director of QYAC; Rod Hudson, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Spoutlogic Consulting, with over three decades of experience in strategic brand management, digital and creative strategy; and Robin Way, a former Queensland government assistant director-general with strengths in governance and financial management.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing board members—Sarah Kelly, Nancy Bamaga, Brenda LaPorte, Duane Fraser and Chris Mills—for their service to Tourism and Events Queensland and their commitment to growing the state's tourism sector and its national and international profile in recent years. They have done a fantastic job and they leave a very rich legacy.

The new TEQ leadership team comes from a range of backgrounds—tourism, marketing, media, aviation and governance—which perfectly equips them to provide expert guidance to TEQ and the state's tourism industry. As a former TEQ board member and now Minister for Tourism, I look forward to seeing the new board working together with the team at TEQ to entice travellers to visit Queensland and grow overnight visitor expenditure to meet our \$44 billion target by 2032. TEQ's new leadership team commences 3 August 2024.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to the department of tourism SDS and partnering with government and industry to grow tourism, can the minister provide an update on opportunities that exist around Brisbane River tourism?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. It is a hot topic at the moment when you take into account the opening of the Olympics in Paris, which is getting very mixed reviews. The Brisbane River is vitally important to the city's visitor economy. We know that, and there are opportunities to expand it. We have been working with the private sector to deliver long-term berthing options on the Brisbane River, which is why in February I was pleased to announce \$4 million towards an expanded commercial marina at Morningside. The funding is part of a \$30 million Growing Future Tourism program. Funding of between \$1 million to \$4 million was made available on a one-to-one co-contribution basis, with applicants to contribute at least 50 per cent of the total eligible project costs. The expanded marina will support up to 42 commercial vessels ranging from 15 metres to 35 metres in length for river and bay operators for berthing and, most importantly, provisioning. The Queensland government also has a \$1.1 million support package on the table to help existing tour operators on the inner city reaches of the Brisbane River secure alternative overnight mooring facilities.

In May I took the time to meet with the Lord Mayor to discuss various strategies to enhance the visitor economy in preparation for the Brisbane 2023 Olympic and Paralympic Games. While my department is leading this work, we are seeking input from the Brisbane City Council to inform this process—which is what a government that consults with all organisations and people does. The Lord Mayor was very receptive to working together to progress this opportunity, and he committed to

establishing a working group to oversee development of the Brisbane River Vision. The first meeting of the Brisbane River Vision working group was held Monday, 29 July. I understand the meeting was very positive, with all stakeholders at the table committing to working together on a vision for the Brisbane River.

The Brisbane River Vision working group aims to guide the development of the vision, offer innovative ideas and opportunities, and create a forum for collaboration between local and state government and the tourism industry on the vision's development. This is fundamental to ensure we have widespread engagement. The vision will highlight significant opportunities for the river as well as the need for a long-term solution to meet future demand and capitalise on the economic and tourism value of the river. The vision is not intended to be a statutory planning or master planning exercise. Its aim is to maximise the potential of the river to deliver world-class attractions and experiences and to attract investment to build a more competitive visitor economy. The vision will focus on activating the river in advance of Brisbane 2032. As the relevant local government authority, BCC's involvement and input is critical to the success of these initiatives. As we head into the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games, future tourism opportunities around the river are limitless. We want to do the essential planning work and we want to be best positioned to capitalise on these opportunities and attract further investment.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Chair, I just want to go to the minister to unpack six areas of commitment before the last election. There was a \$20 million fund to develop experiences under the Queensland Tourism Activation Fund; \$20 million to secure events under events boost; \$15 million for an RTO recovery fund; \$15 million for a marketing blitz; \$4 million for business development training; and \$1 million in research about future trends in tourism. That is \$75 million across the six programs. Can the minister confirm that the full \$75 million commitment has been funded in the last four budgets?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I will refer to my director-general. That was a fairly significant body of work.

Mr Hopper: Member, if I miss one as I go through please do not hesitate to point them out again. The expected delivery date for the \$15 million, which was to administer programs related to new airline routes to Queensland, was 31 December 2024. You talked to the \$20 million to partner with the tourism industry and councils to develop existing and new Queensland tourism experiences under the Tourism Activation Fund. The expected delivery date for that is 30 June 2026. Member, can you remind me of the others you mentioned?

Mr CRISAFULLI: The second was events boost.

Mr Hopper: Yes, that money has been allocated to TEQ.

Mr CRISAFULLI: There was \$15 million for an RTO recovery fund.

Mr Hopper: Also administered to TEQ.

Mr CRISAFULLI: And \$15 million for a marketing blitz.

Mr Hopper: Also administered to TEQ.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Yes, and \$4 million for business development training.

Mr Hopper: I will just check that we undertook that. Again, all of the money exists. It is not that the money does not exist; it is just where the money was administered.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Finally, \$1 million to research future trends.

Mr Hopper: I do have it here. There was \$4 million to deliver business capability training and futureproof the industry and \$1 million to go towards research to better understand the trends and future direction of tourism throughout the world. That is delivered.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I might go to the TEQ CEO. Is it your understanding that all of that money has been allocated and accounted for?

Ms O'Callaghan: I thank the member for the question. I do acknowledge that TEQ received \$50 million: \$20 for events boost; \$15 million for the marketing blitz; and \$15 million for the RTO recovery fund. All of that money has been expended.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Can I just unpack the \$15 million for the RTOs. Did TEQ pay that directly to all of the RTOs? Can you just explain a little bit about that funding model?

Ms O'Callaghan: I thank the member for the question. TEQ did administer the \$15 million RTO recover fund over three financial years. We supported the delivery of 68 projects to help position Queensland and fast-track recovery. We worked with the RTOs on delivering that. I can also confirm that across the three financial years that money was split into a series of grant funds, contestable grants, network-wide strategic projects and transition support funds.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the CEO. Has an analysis been done about a breakdown across those years across the different RTOs, who received what and what percentage?

Ms O'Callaghan: Yes, we do keep account of the funds that are distributed to the RTOs and we do normally have those funds acquitted, especially around contestable projects.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Does it show any trends? Does it show any areas for improvement in terms of the distribution of funds across the network?

Ms O'Callaghan: Where the contestable funds, in particular those projects, have been exceptionally valuable is the RTOs have worked with either the private sector or councils to bring in matched funding, so we are essentially leveraging TEQ and government funds. They have been able to deliver a number of different projects across the years.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chair, I have a further question to the CEO. I refer to the Queensland is Bluey's World campaign launched in June. Can the CEO advise of the amount paid for the use of Bluey's IP?

Ms O'Callaghan: I can confirm that we spent \$9.2 million on the campaign, but I cannot confirm what we spent on Bluey's IP because that is commercial-in-confidence.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, why would that be the case after the deal has been executed? Why would that amount remain commercial-in-confidence?

Mr HEALY: I am sorry. I did not hear the dialogue. I was having a chat. What was that about?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Regarding Bluey's World, how much has been paid to Bluey and in particular in what capacity? Did it go to BBC Studios? Can we at least say that?

Mr HEALY: I will direct that to the CEO of Tourism and Events Queensland. What I will say is that there were significant commercial transactions and they are covered by commercial-in-confidence, which I am sure most people would understand. I will hand that over to the CEO.

Ms O'Callaghan: Yes, it was BBC.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the CEO. I understand the execution of commercial-in-confidence during the process, but after it has been done, after a deal has been signed, what is the reason for commercial-in-confidence continuing post that?

CHAIR: Member, the question you are asking is becoming repetitive. I think the CEO has given an answer to the question you have already asked and so has the minister. You are repeating the question over again. I will give you some latitude. Is there anything else that the CEO or the minister would like to add to that?

Mr HEALY: I think it is pretty straightforward really—commercial-in-confidence.

Mr CRISAFULLI: In a further question to the CEO, have any termination payments been made to any outgoing executive team members since you were appointed to TEQ? If so, what is the total amount paid?

Ms O'Callaghan: I can confirm that since my arrival we have had two outgoing group executives. We have had Mr Michael Branagh from the group executive of marketing and we have also had the group executive of corporate and strategy. I can confirm that Mr Michael Branagh did have his contract paid out and he also received an ex gratia payment of \$86,000, or 13 weeks. I can also confirm that Nick Elliott was paid out of the remainder of his contract and received an ex gratia payment of \$69,000.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Can the CEO provide the amount spent on staff travel in 2023-24 and the budgeted amount for 2024-25?

Ms O'Callaghan: Yes, I can. With regard to TEQ staff travel costs for 2023-24, a total of \$893,767 was spent.

Mr CRISAFULLI: And the budgeted amount for 2024-25?

Ms O'Callaghan: The budgeted amount would be very similar, but I will find the answer to that.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, I am happy to wait 30 seconds if it is close. Otherwise, we can move on.

Mr HEALY: How close are we to an answer?

Ms O'Callaghan: I will come back.

Mr HEALY: We will come back before the end of the session.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Director-General, in last year's estimates it was advised that the remaining two new pontoons at Howard Smith Wharves to facilitate travel to Stradbroke Island would be completed by mid-2024. Has the work been completed?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. The first pontoon was completed in March 2021 and the remaining two pontoons were due for delivery in March 2024. However, there have been delays that the proponent incurred due to rescoping, redesign and associated approval requirements. On 7 February 2024, the development application for upstream and downstream commercial pontoons was granted by Brisbane City Council. We are currently working with the proponent to progress delivery under revised timelines, with the remaining two pontoons currently estimated to be delivered by 30 June 2025.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, this was promised at the 2020 election and completion is now not until the middle of next year. Does this show that the Queensland government will not build projects on time and on budget under your watch?

CHAIR: Under standing orders, I really have to rule on that. Member, you understand standing order 115(b) that your question cannot contain arguments, inferences, imputations or hypothetical matters. I could rule your question out of order but I will give the minister some latitude in answering that.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you, Chair.

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. What it is is that the proponent's timeline has changed.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is the old proponent. Director-General, I want to unpack a media release from 27 March regarding domestic and international tourism. It was an assessment of visitor numbers, if you have that handy. The data quoted for this release was from Tourism Research Australia and shows that the number of international trips to New South Wales was down 22 per cent and South Australia was down seven per cent. In comparison, Queensland was down 29 per cent. The minister also said the average number of nights by international visitors is up. Can the director-general advise if the department disclosed that the total number of nights was actually down nine per cent and whether it was included in the original release given to the minister?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. I will refer that question to Tourism and Events Queensland, who manage the relationship with Tourism Research Australia in relation to that data point.

Ms O'Callaghan: Can I ask the member to recount the question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Of course. This relates to the media release of 27 March, so your preparations would have been just prior to that. It was regarding domestic and international tourism and a positive assessment about international visitors staying longer and spending more than pre COVID. The data quoted for this release from Tourism Research Australia shows the number of international trips to New South Wales was down 22 per cent, South Australia was down seven per cent and Western Australia was down 22 per cent, while Queensland's comparative figure was down 29 per cent. The minister said the average number of nights by international visitors is up. I am just asking whether or not in the original release provided to the minister it was disclosed that the total number of nights was actually down by nine per cent. That figure was not contained in the release that was distributed.

Ms O'Callaghan: I will have to take that on notice, through the minister.

Mr HEALY: Yes. Do you have the answer to the other one?

Ms O'Callaghan: Yes, I do. Leader of the Opposition, we will get the answer for that. In regard to the other answer you required around staff travel, our FY25 budget is \$827,570.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Thank you. Minister, you also said in this media release that international visitors are spending more than they were in 2019. Can the minister advise why he did not disclose in the same media release that the overall spend is actually down six per cent despite four years of inflation?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I would have to have a look at that media release. There are several media releases. Usually I get the information from TEQ. I might hand that over to TEQ and see what we have on that matter.

Ms O'Callaghan: We will get the answer.

CHAIR: Will you take it on notice?

Mr HEALY: Yes.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, in April 2023 it was announced that the business case for the Paluma to Wallaman Falls Trail was completed. I cannot find any mention of the project in the budget. Could you explain why?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. Ecotourism is a key contributor to Queensland's tourism industry which supports 260,000 Queensland jobs, including one in five jobs in the North Queensland region. Nature-based tourism is a significant contributor to the Queensland economy, with a total spend by visitors who include a visit to a national park in their holiday itinerary adding \$4.43 billion to the state.

In relation to the business case for the Paluma to Wallaman Falls Trail, it was completed in July 2022. We are currently engaging with traditional owner groups in the early stage of the project investigations. Learnings from Wangetti will be fundamental to the progressing of this trail. It is anticipated that investigative works will be finalised by late 2024. My director-general might have some additional advice on that for you.

Mr Hopper: Over the past 12 months, the department has established a project working group with the traditional owners and the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation. We have held workshops with the traditional owners on their aspirations and vision. We have started development on the trail head activation plan to bring forward tourism opportunities at key locations along the proposed alignment. The next stage for the project is investigations into commercial opportunities and approvals and tenure pathways, with traditional owners advising ways they want to see this project progressed. It is anticipated this investigative work on a way forward will be finalised in late 2024. Following these investigative works, the direction the project takes going forward will be clear, with a primary goal of ensuring a tourism outcome with opportunities for traditional owners on country.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I might ask a follow-up question to the director-general. I do not see any money or reference to it in the forwards. Is it your understanding that the viability of the project is still up in the air?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the follow-up question. Right now we are working with the traditional owners on how this project could move forward. As part of that, that will determine the final requirements as it relates to funding should the project continue forward. At that time, we would be looking to prepare a funding submission to executive government to seek funding, but it would be pre-emptive to do that at this stage.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Minister, is that an important project for you as part of the ecotourism jigsaw puzzle?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. All of our ecotourism projects are vitally important. We know that ecotourism is growing. There is strong interest around the world and in Australia. To see this we only have to look at walking trails, not just in Tasmania but also around the world—Spain and other places. We need to invest. We need to work with partners. We need to work with traditional owners.

Ecotourism is a complex area. It comes with a challenging set of criteria. This is important, as all of those activities are. Since 2015 we have provided \$149 million towards 127 ecotourism projects, 87 of which are complete, with a total project value of \$369 million. We have a proven track record of delivering ecotourism products across Queensland—projects like an expansion of the Jarramali Rock Art Tours at Cape York Peninsula, which is extremely popular; upgrading of the Carnarvon Gorge holiday park facilities, including additional eco accommodation; an outdoor tourism hub in the Pioneer Valley near Mackay; the refurbishment of the Turtle Sands holiday park at Mon Repos, which I visited recently—it looks absolutely fantastic; a luxury walkers camp adjacent to the Lamington National Park in the Gold Coast Hinterland; nature-based eco lodging and glamping pods on South Stradbroke Island; and the delivery of the transformative and well underway Wangetti Trail—something we are committed to and we have funded. This is just to name a few projects.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I want to unpack some of those larger projects. These are projects that we have heard about over two successive elections. The Cooloola Great Walk does not appear to be progressing, the Thorsborne Trail on Hinchinbrook Island does not appear to be progressing, there is no money allocated for Paluma to Wallaman Falls, and Wangetti is approaching half a decade delay. Why is it that places like Tasmania and New Zealand are able to bring ecotourism projects of this scale to market but Queensland has been incapable of doing it for a decade?

CHAIR: Member, your question is speculative.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chairman, with respect—

CHAIR: Can you rephrase the question?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I can rephrase. What is different in Queensland that is preventing large-scale ecotourism projects coming to market? Is it a department within the Queensland government? What is the roadblock that is stopping the department of tourism from fulfilling its wishes for projects of this scale?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. Everyone I talk to in the tourism sector across the state has real concerns about the Leader of the Opposition and his perception—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chairman, is that—

CHAIR: The minister will get to the answer.

Mr HEALY: I just want to note that the chair of the Noosa LNP branch who ran unsuccessfully for the council—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Chairman, is this—

Mr HEALY: This is talking about ecotourism. This is national parks.

CHAIR: Are you raising a point of order?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I sure am, Mr Chairman. With respect, I just want a simple answer about what the roadblock is for ecotourism.

CHAIR: I will ask the minister to answer the question.

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. As I said earlier, one of the challenges we face is that ecotourism is very complex and usually is in very delicate areas. For example, the Wangetti Trail is in a World Heritage area and national parks and finds itself working through a number of traditional owner areas. As I said earlier, since 2015 we have provided \$149 million towards 127 ecotourism products, 87 of which are complete. This is with a total value of \$369 million.

I appreciate, as most people would, that there are complexities in progressing certain projects. As we have heard, in Airlie Beach we are waiting on the federal government to come back with some environmental details. We are waiting for a range of initiatives. My goal and objective is to get the money out the door as quick as we can. I have spent my entire working life in the tourism sector, and I want to see the money getting out to the right people and I want to see a collaborative approach between governments.

In terms of some of the complexities—as I said, you only have to look at the Wangetti Trail—we have to work our way through these. You can scour through a budget and you can identify where things have not been delivered, because there is criteria and people need to meet those criteria. We will continue to work with industry and we will continue to invest. As I said, there are 127 ecotourism projects, 87 of which have been completed, to the project value of \$369 million.

We will continue to work with industry, we will continue to work with investors and we will continue to grow our ecotourism products in our regions because we know that they are a fundamental part of our tourism offerings. Unlike the LNP, we as a government have a plan.

Dr ROBINSON: Like the 400 ecotourism jobs you never created on Straddie? We are still waiting for them.

CHAIR: Excuse me. I turn to the member for South Brisbane for a question.

Dr MacMAHON: My questions relate to the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund, the government's \$100 million fund for handouts for airlines and airports. Minister, in response to the question on notice you have said that 49 per cent of all flights arriving very late at night, between 10 pm and 6 am, are funded through this fund—essentially, taxpayer funded. When you are deciding which flights or routes to fund, do you have any criteria that look at whether this money will be used to prop up very late night flights?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question and state for the record: the fund is actually a \$200 million fund. There is \$100 million from the Queensland government and there is \$100 million contributed by four international airports. We have more in our state than any other jurisdiction in the Commonwealth.

Aircraft scheduling is controlled by airports, airlines and Airservices Australia and is not a matter for the state government. It is certainly not a matter that somebody would bring to my attention. The Attracting Aviation Investment Fund has brought thousands of international travellers back to Queensland after the pandemic. I think you have to have an understanding of how detrimental and destructive the pandemic was to aviation around the world. We are an island. In Cairns, 87 per cent of visitors get off an aeroplane. Aviation is absolutely essential.

The reason we got together collaboratively was not only because we are working with airports. There are directly and indirectly over 260,000 Queenslanders involved in the tourism and leisure industry, not to mention our exports. There is a huge amount at risk. The fund has done a remarkable job so far in attracting 2.27 million inbound seats per year—over 35 services, generating more than \$2 billion in overnight visitor expenditure. That is supporting in the aviation sector 23,000 good jobs.

The fund has been instrumental in rebuilding our \$34 billion visitor economy. Securing international flights also supports Queensland's wider economy including food and freight exports and the return of up to 30,000 international students, who are vitally important to our economy, particularly when you take into account that 30 per cent of those international students live, work and study in regional areas.

The AAIF is focused on securing the flights, then leaving the scheduling to the experts—namely, the airports, airlines and Airservices Australia. The Queensland government will continue to work with Queensland international and regional airports and industry partners to stimulate aviation and tourism in Queensland.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, you have said that scheduling is a matter for the airports and airlines. Can you clarify whether you or your department have any say in which flights the money from the government goes towards?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I might hand that over to my director-general.

Mr Hopper: Member, in terms of where the money is directed, that is based on an assessment of the opportunity, by airline and by route, so every assessment is dependent on the commercial terms put forward.

Dr MacMAHON: That is an assessment done by the government or by the airlines and airport?

Mr Hopper: Submissions are made by the airport on behalf of the airlines and other partners. Then that is assessed by the department. There is a panel that assesses that.

Dr MacMAHON: To clarify, that means the department would have been aware of which flights this money is going towards and have checked it off against this submission process?

Mr Hopper: The department is aware of the routes and the airlines, but the timing of those services the department is not necessarily aware of, no.

Dr MacMAHON: Would the department have the capacity to say, 'We would prefer this fund not be used to fund particular flights'?

Mr Hopper: The department's remit is to ensure that services from international markets are the best services possible that support our strategies. That is the extent of our assessment.

Dr MacMAHON: Does the government get any kind of final sign-off on which flights get a proportion of that fund?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. When you say 'government', do you mean the department or do you mean the minister?

Dr MacMAHON: The department.

Mr Hopper: I ultimately am the decision-maker, based on the recommendation through the assessment process.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, we have \$100 million of public funds going towards airports and airlines, many of which are foreign owned and big business, including these very late-night flights. We know that flight noise is causing a lot of heartache for a lot of residents. The Premier has said that he believes people who are worried about flight noise are inner-city elites. Do you share that view?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I have to say I have not heard the Premier say that and I do not think the question makes any sort of sense. What I do know is that aviation is absolutely essential in this modern day and age. When I was living in Holloways Beach in Cairns, planes flew right over the top of my place, so I can understand and appreciate people being a little disgruntled. I have no doubt, member, you are representing some of your electorate and I think that is a good thing.

The reality is that aviation is an essential part of moving people around the planet. As an island destination, Australia needed to ensure we had the attention of major airlines. When you are looking at a \$100 million asset or a \$200 million asset which is an aeroplane and airlines are looking at getting the best returns, they allocate those aircraft to where they will get the best yield. The best yield is coming out of the front end of the plane which is the business class and they are not going to be destinations like the Gold Coast, Cairns or other areas. We have to incentivise the international airlines. These airlines are also suffering from staff issues so they have to rebuild themselves.

We have entered into a range of commercial agreements—and there are trigger points for funding and spending—and this is because it is vitally important for our economy, it is vitally important for our export opportunities, it is international students—the benefits are significant. I appreciate the frustration, but the aviation sector is essential to our ongoing development and our economy.

Dr MacMAHON: The question on notice we submitted did request which particular airlines were getting funds, and you have said you are not able to answer that part of the question. I will point out that Emirates, for example, made \$7 billion in profit last year. The criteria for funding for this program includes value for money. Can you clarify how it is value for money for taxpayers to be handing money to a company making that level of profit?

Mr HEALY: I am sorry, did the member say you asked for the list of airlines? There would be no reason we would not give those to you because there is nothing commercial in confidence. We have that out on the record. There is a press release done every time we do that. I would be happy to do that. Sorry, your question was?

Dr MacMAHON: It was how value for money is calculated given you have companies making large amounts of profits.

Mr HEALY: Yes, and that is probably important if you want to keep a business going. I will hand over to the director-general, but before I do hand over to the director-general, as he has indicated and as I have said earlier, there is a criteria that has to be met. The criteria is ensuring we get the benefit. We do not say, 'How much money are you making?' It is how much they are going to help us and what benefits they will bring to Queensland, and that is why we use taxpayers' money. I will hand over to the director-general to deal with the rest of that question.

Mr Hopper: Thank you, Minister. I thank the member for the question. The minister has touched on a number of the criteria—international students, freight opportunities, visitors from our international markets being able to access direct aviation services through to the different international airports that we have here in Queensland. All of those factors are considered, along with the commercial terms proposed. In so assessing how much funding support is provided, we obviously then look to the return on investment. For example—and the minister has touched on this—the scale of the program is a \$200 million program, \$100 million of that is taxpayer funded, and to date—and the program is certainly not complete—we have seen 2.27 million inbound international seats which are forecast to generate up to \$2 billion in overnight visitor expenditure for the state. Obviously, Queensland is such an important tourism sector and a contributor to the economy. It was just under 10 per cent pre COVID. I think we are back towards six or seven per cent now and building. In some regions, one in three or one in four jobs are tourism jobs.

The international tourist is a critical tourist. They spend more highly than domestic visitors. They travel further and disperse further. Equally, international students play a key role supporting other areas in the economy, including from a workforce perspective, so they play a critical role. Of course, the trade opportunities that are generated by those airlines and direct routes are significant, and that is why when we look to the program, we look to what we are going to support, we look to the return on investment and all of those factors are considered.

I think the other significant learning, as a result of COVID, was we need to have diversified international markets. So, again, I think it is important that when we look at our aviation connectivity we are looking at it through the lens of making sure it is a very diversified offering and that we can have plenty of opportunities for visitors to come here, but equally sending trade out.

CHAIR: I give the call to the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 1 of the Department of Tourism and Sport's Service Delivery Statements and the reference to the Towards Tourism 2032 strategy, could you provide an update on the implementation of the strategy?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. Towards Tourism 2032: Transforming Queensland's visitor economy future strategy is Queensland's collective framework to guide industry and government's partnership to deliver long-term growth and success for Queensland tourism. I want to emphasise this: this was something that was done collaboratively with trade. Towards Tourism 2032 adopts a vision that by 2032 Queensland will be Australia's destination of choice for domestic and global visitors seeking the world's best experiences. With industry, we are now midway into phase 1 of the delivery to build and focus. Currently, Queensland's tourism industry is worth \$34 billion in annual overnight visitor expenditure and on track to meet industry's target for \$44.4 billion by 2032.

The Miles government has supported 35 international airline services to Queensland, under the \$200 million joint Attracting Aviation Investment Fund. We are delivering marketing initiatives to grow visitation from target markets, and we are supporting improvements in accessibility and, more importantly, in the resilience of industry particularly in the key areas. We are attracting major international sporting events and we continue with the ongoing delivery of grant funding programs to develop an enhanced tourism product, infrastructure and inevitably experiences. The Miles government works in partnership with the tourism industry to achieve these outcomes.

I want to make note that the opposition leader has been talking about his 20-year tourism plan for four years, but nobody has seen it, nobody has heard anything about it and, as far as I know, nobody has been consulted on it. In fact, I must say there has been very little said. The Leader of the Opposition, in his budget reply speech, made no mention of his 20-year tourism plan. In fact, there was only one vague mention of tourism at all. For such a fundamental industry, such a key economic driver and such a large employer, that is enormously concerning.

We will continue to invest heavily in these areas. We will continue to work collaboratively with industry and we will get industry feedback. I can tell you that, as a government, we do not always get things right, so we are very happy to not only work through our engagement with regional tourism organisations, Tourism and Events Queensland provide a strong sounding-board. There is strong engagement with TEQ and the regional tourism organisations and also local tourism organisations, and there are quite a lot of those. Particularly, as the member would know, in her seat not only do we have TTNQ but also a local tourism organisation in Port Douglas who continue to represent their members well. We continue to engage at all levels, and I want to acknowledge the hard work done by the team at TEQ and the CEO, and their engagement has been absolutely fantastic.

The Miles government has committed over \$270 million for the initiatives that are linked to phase 1 of our strategy. These investments are making a difference and leveraging important contributions from our industry. Under our government, the Queensland visitor economy is well positioned to transform and grow—setting our sights on the decade of opportunities ahead. We will continue to work in partnership with the tourism industry to deliver on the Towards Tourism 2032: Transforming Queensland's visitor economy future strategy because it is important, it is a big employer, it is fundamental to our economic development and it will provide a great future for anyone who wants to get into that industry and find a good hardworking job.

Mr SKELTON: With reference to page 9 of the Service Delivery Statements and the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund—I apologise, it has been mentioned before—could you please provide an update on the fund?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. Whilst I accept it has been mentioned before, it is vitally important. It is something that myself and my colleagues are very happy to talk about on a regular basis. This has been the largest fund available from any jurisdiction in the Commonwealth. When you take into account that we are competing with Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and other jurisdictions across this country, we needed to make sure that we got in early, that we started to engage with these airlines and that we made sure it would be economically viable and attractive—it has to be. At the end of the day, it had to be justifiable. The Queensland government's \$100 million boost has been matched dollar-for-dollar by airports, regional tourism organisations and tourism operators. This enables airports to negotiate with airlines to fast-track more direct flights into Queensland. That is the sole objective; it is absolutely key. As we have heard, 35 services have received support under the fund. These services are estimated to deliver over 2.27 billion inbound international seats and up to \$2 billion in overnight visitor expenditure each year and to support 23,000 Queensland jobs.

At this stage I will use a place that is very close to me—Cairns—as an example. If we look at the investment that tourism numbers bring, some years back we had a gentleman turn up. He had had an inspection of Cairns, he saw the upgrades and he saw how impressive our international airport was. Mr Ghassan Aboud then invested well over \$600 million in two brand spanking new hotels and the refurbishment of another hotel. This Aviation Attraction Fund not only brings in international visitors and students and assist by taking out our natural produce—aquaculture and agriculture—but it also attracts investment. Investment provides opportunities for jobs and good long-lasting careers. This has been absolutely fantastic.

In reply to the member who was asking earlier: Delta Airlines, three services per week between Los Angeles and Brisbane. The airline will fly to Queensland for the first time. This service will support over 271,000 inbound seats. American Airlines will offer daily services from 27 October 2024 linking Dallas Fort Worth to Brisbane, flying directly to Queensland for the first time and supporting 140,000

inbound seats. The United Airlines flight from San Francisco, operating since October 2022, supports over 227,000 inbound seats and has generated \$151 million in visitor expenditure over the three years. Singapore Airlines offers an A350-900 wide-body service to Cairns with over 100,000 extra inbound seats over three years generating an additional \$108 million in overnight visitor expenditure and supporting up to 210 jobs. This morning I was talking to some of our agriculture and aquaculture producers. Having a wide-body service flying into Cairns is fantastic for our regional economy because, as I said earlier, it provides the foundation stone to grow the export market. China Eastern Airlines has recommenced services between Shanghai and Brisbane with three services per week, growing to daily services over the next three years. Cathay Pacific will be returning to Cairns, recommencing services from Hong Kong for the December 2024 to March 2025 season—at this stage—and its flights to Brisbane will increase from six flights per week to 10 per week in October 2024 to March 2025.

We know that more flights means more tourists. That is why international aviation connectivity is absolutely critical to the economic recovery of Queensland's tourism industry. The AAIF enables our airports to negotiate with airlines and to fast-track more direct flights into Queensland. I want to see more planes landing at our major airports filled with tourists who want to experience the fantastic and world-class products that we have across Queensland. That is what this funding is doing—it is helping us to achieve that. I thank Queensland's international airports for their commitment. This is another great example of the government working with the private sector to rebuild Queensland's visitor economy and to create jobs. The combined \$200 million international aviation investment is predicted to deliver more than 5.3 million airline seats per year and to generate up to almost \$4 billion, which is a good thing for Queensland.

CHAIR: Is that all the airlines that were requested by the member for South Brisbane in her earlier question? I am looking at the outstanding questions that you may have answers for the committee on. I think the answer that you just gave may have been in response to the question that the member for South Brisbane asked. There are outstanding questions; do you have the answers for the committee now, or are you intend to take any of those questions on notice?

Mr HEALY: I believe, Chair, that the director-general will be able to touch on those.

Mr Hopper: The question related to the \$3 million to be spent in 2023-24 for marine infrastructure last year. We have been working through the contracts and finalising those. We now have one funding agreement in place and we are currently finalising the two remaining funding agreements which relate to the \$3 million. That is why the money was not spent in 2023-24.

The question related to the King of the Mountain event is a matter for DESI but I am happy to provide some insight. As I understand it, there was an amendment that was requested for this year's event to stagger it over two stages of 40 competitors each. All of the other conditions remained unchanged and, ultimately, the decision to withdraw the event was that of the event proponent.

In relation to Activate Ecotourism, the \$3 million that was deferred is to match the anticipated delivery schedule. There were delays relating to the availability of contractors and suppliers, as well as a recent bushfire and weather events.

As to the question that related to Minjerribah, we have had some delays in the delivery of building materials. There has been some ongoing coastal wet weather for several months post-Christmas but QUAMPI is now on track for practical completion on 27 September 2024. Twenty-two of the 25 projects under Minjerribah Futures are complete and we continue to work with the Quandamooka people through QYAC to deliver these projects.

In relation to the Wangetti question and the \$3.4 million that is being recategorised from equity funding to operating funding, there is no change in the overall project funding. The recategorisation is to cover the operational costs of the project that do not fit the guidelines of capitalised construction costs.

In terms of what I agreed to last year in relation to ILUAs, I did agree that only ILUAs on the southern stage only would be concluded. To correct myself, there are seven ILUAs required across three claimant groups. Four of those ILUAs are in place and they relate to the southern stage. As I said, we have three ILUAs still to complete.

In terms of growing Indigenous tourism in Queensland, the majority of projects have been successfully completed. The remaining budget is committed to two infrastructure projects that have faced a number of delays. We have the Olkola Aboriginal Corporation for the cultural knowledge centre and Torres Shire Council for the Thursday Island information and business centre.

The two remaining projects, though, are due for completion by December 2024, which will then finalise all commitments for this funding initiative.

In relation to AIF services and the list, I have seen a question on notice that shows all those services listed in a table. It is QoN 1. If that is not there, please let us know and we will endeavour to get you a copy.

CHAIR: That should cover it. There may be two questions on notice from the opposition leader. Do you have them?

Mr HEALY: They are on Tourism and Events Queensland.


Ms O'Callaghan: On the first question around the media release, I can confirm we did brief the minister and the department on the Tourism Research Australia data for the year ended December 2023. The data did show that Queensland's international visitation remained 29.1 per cent down on 2019. Queensland's recovery of international visitation following the pandemic has consistently tracked ahead of the national average. This is what was included in the media release that TEQ prepared for the minister and was included in the final version. The data also showed international visitors stayed on average longer than in 2019. They stayed, on average, six nights longer on their trips in 2023 than in 2019. That was also included in the draft and the final.

CHAIR: That is both questions on notice?

Ms O'Callaghan: In relation to the second question I can confirm the international and national visitor survey results from TRA for the year ending March 2024 show that Queensland reached a combined \$34.1 billion in total OVE including \$28 billion in domestic OVE and a record \$6.1 billion in international OVE. These numbers did exceed OVE in 2019.

CHAIR: The committee will now adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 6.30 pm.

Proceedings suspended from 6.21 pm to 6.30 pm.

 **CHAIR:** I now declared the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of sport open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: I will hand over to the shadow minister.

Mr MANDER: My first question is to the minister. Minister, I imagine you are like me and have been watching the games very closely and seeing how well the Aussies are going. Minister, can you advise how many athletes who are part of the Australian Olympic team have been involved in the High Performance Program that the QAS provides?

Mr HEALY: I want to begin by thanking the member for the question and state from the outset that I am totally in agreeance with him; I have been glued to the TV. I have been gutted with some results, but haven't we performed extremely well? In relation to the academy, I can say that overall the academy supports 585 athletes on their elite sporting journey, which includes 545 supported athletes. That is defined as categorised athletes with 22 sports plus medal support plans, 40 Talent Support Plan athletes, 378 athletes identified through the You for 2032 progress to the development phase of the program. A total of 142 Queensland athletes have been selected on the Australian Olympic team and so far 45 of them on the Paralympic team for Paris 2024. They are the figures currently. I understand that the Paralympic team is still taking on people. The answer would be that we are doing well: 142 Queensland athletes and 45 on the Paralympic team.

Mr MANDER: Would most of those athletes have come into contact with the QAS?

Mr HEALY: I understand that is the case, yes.

Mr MANDER: I know I am speaking in general terms. Minister, would you agree that one of the major objectives of the QAS is basically to put athletes in a position where they could bring gold medals back to Australia?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question, although it is more of a statement. However, I would have to agree. Ideally, the golden objective of elite athletes is to reach the highest level they can. As a kid I was always told that if I ever met an Olympic champion I would not get any higher than that, so I would agree with that assumption.

Mr MANDER: They have done a very good job in doing that. Minister, would you agree that the decision to change the governance structure and the subsequent departure of the former CEO and the chair of the advisory board over the last six months has left the QAS in a state of turmoil?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. On 12 July the Premier announced the Queensland Academy of Sport, or QAS as we know it, will transition to a statutory body. The new model will strengthen the academy's ability to support elite athletes to go for gold and provide best practice training opportunities.

Since 1991 the academy has helped young Queenslanders achieve at the highest level. In the academy's first year, it supported 35 scholarship holders including Susie O'Neill, Kieren Perkins and Steven Bradbury. By 2023 that number had grown to 750. A total of 180 Queensland sports stars are representing the nation at the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris with selections still continuing. That is a record number of Queenslanders representing 'Team Australia'.

The move follows a review into the organisation and consultation with key stakeholders, which determined that a statutory body arrangement would better serve Queensland's sporting superstars. A new bill will be introduced to the parliament to ensure the statutory body's board will be independent and have the skills and diversity to perform its functions effectively and, more importantly, to do that efficiently. The board led by a chairperson will ensure the strategic vision, compliance with regulations and achievement of performance targets of the Queensland Academy of Sport. The board members will provide advice, participate in committees and represent the needs of sporting communities and athletes, so there will be a broader engagement with the sporting community, which we think is a good thing.

A process will determine the chief executive officer who will align the Queensland Academy of Sport operations with the board's directives. Operations at the Queensland Academy of Sport will continue as normal while the passage of legislation takes place and the organisation transitions from a government to a statutory body. For more than 30 years the Queensland Academy of Sport has established itself as one of the most highly regarded institutions for the support of elite athletes anywhere in the world, and we are seeing that play out on our TV, as was indicated earlier. I would like to pay tribute to all the hardworking staff who have contributed to the incredible success of QAS, including the 36 who have been selected to support the Australian Olympic and Paralympic teams in Paris and, naturally, we wish them all very well.

Mr MANDER: Minister, I want to explore the journey to the decision that you just mentioned about the statutory authority and the future. I want to talk a little bit about the previous CEO. Would you agree that when Ms Warr was appointed in 2020 from UK Sport it was considered quite a coup for Queensland to get her to head up the QAS?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. That was before my time. I have never met the previous CEO, so I really cannot comment on that.

Mr MANDER: Were you aware it was widely accepted that Ms Warr was considered one of the key architects behind team—

CHAIR: Member, on a point of order, can you explain to me how this is relevant—

Mr MANDER: This is extremely relevant.

CHAIR: No, relevant to this budget appropriation.

Mr MANDER: Yes.

CHAIR: This one, this particular one?

Mr MANDER: It is extremely relevant—

CHAIR: How?

Mr MANDER:—to a decision that has been made about the new structure of the QAS. This is talking about the old structure and how we have come to that decision.

CHAIR: But it is not relevant to this appropriation.

Mr MANDER: Yes, it is. I just explained it.

Mr BENNETT: The Queensland Academy of Sport.

Mr MANDER: The Queensland Academy of Sport.

Mr BENNETT: It is in the appropriations.

CHAIR: Go ahead.

Mr MANDER: Let me get back to what I was saying. Minister, were you aware that it was widely accepted that Ms Warr was considered to be one of the key architects behind Team Great Britain's success in the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Olympic Games?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I would like to say that I am aware that there are a vast array of highly skilled people who are working at QAS and they do a fantastic job. I am happy to leave it at that.

Mr MANDER: Are you aware that when Ms Warr was appointed to her position the reason, as stated by your government, was that Ms Warr was appointed to increase Australia's medal-winning chances for Brisbane in 2032?

Mr HEALY: I was not a minister at the time and I was not aware of any statements. I think I may have even been assistant minister for tourism and tourism industry development at the time. I was heavily focused on tourism industry development.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, did it come as a shock to you when the former CEO left her position?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. As it relates to public servants, it is not appropriate to be discussing employee arrangements or circumstances.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, I am reliably told that on Tuesday, 30 January Ms Warr enthusiastically addressed staff and athletes at the academy to share with them her excitement about the future of the QAS. The very next day you issued a staff memo advising that Ms Warr would be 'moving on to pursue other opportunities'. Can you explain what happened in that intervening period?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question and I will just reiterate that it is not appropriate to discuss employee arrangements or circumstances.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, when was it decided that the CEO's position would be, some might describe, downgraded to a position of general manager?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. The decision to appoint an acting general manager was mine and that decision was taken to ensure that we had continuity for the QAS as we moved towards Paris and subsequently that decision has shown that that continuity has been arrived at. We have had large numbers of athletes selected and equally the largest number of staff overseas supporting those athletes.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, with regard to the decision to make that position acting general manager, was that made before Ms Warr's departure or was it made as a result of Ms Warr's departure?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. Obviously that decision followed the change in circumstances.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, could you confirm that part of that arrangement was that the general manager or acting general manager would now report to the deputy director-general rather than yourself?

Mr Hopper: That is correct on day-to-day matters, but the acting general manager is a member of my executive leadership team and so I engage with him, as I do the other executive members of the department.

Mr MANDER: But his direct report is to the deputy director-general?

Mr Hopper: On a day-to-day basis it is. Again, we wanted to make sure that there was absolutely no delay in decision-making and that the QAS was supported to continue on their way in delivering against their high-performance strategy and supporting Queensland athletes.

Mr MANDER: That was a change though from where that position, whatever name you might give it, used to report directly to you; is that correct?

Mr Hopper: That is correct.

Mr MANDER: Right, and, sorry, why was there the change? What was the reason or the rationale for the change?

Mr Hopper: Structurally and operationally I thought it was the best thing for the department and the best thing for the QAS.

Mr MANDER: Okay. Given that previously the CEO reported directly to you and now reports to the deputy director-general, could you explain what expertise the deputy has in high-performance sport, elite athletic identification and pathway development?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question and I think it is very important to understand that the skill set that exists at the QAS as it relates to high-performance sport is significant. The acting general manager has long experience at the QAS and in other roles, as do the senior leadership team at the QAS. The deputy director-general of sport has significant experience working across the sporting ecosystem. He represents the state in a number of forums that relate to the full sport ecosystem, but at the end of the day his job is to support the QAS, and he does it very well. The job of high-performance decision-making rests with the QAS. It continues to rest with the QAS and there has been no change to that activity.

Mr MANDER: Except a massive loss of experience with Ms Warr's departure?

Mr Hopper: Is that a question or a statement, member?

Mr MANDER: That is a question.

CHAIR: So what is the question?

Mr MANDER: Would you concede that there has been a massive loss of experience with the departure of Ms Warr?

Mr Hopper: There has certainly been a change in leadership.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, I have checked the QAS's website and it states that the advisory board of the QAS has only two members—is that correct—not including yourself?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. That is correct.

Mr MANDER: Why is that the case?

Mr Hopper: Subsequent to the changes that you have been talking about and subsequent to the decisions made by executive government as to the transition of the QAS to a statutory body, the advisory board has not had a role since that time. However, those members wish to remain involved and they are available to the QAS should the QAS staff have particular questions related to their skill sets.

Mr MANDER: So their role has now become obsolete?

Mr Hopper: In the current format our focus has been Paris. On the other side of Paris we will be working up the steps required to transition the QAS to a statutory body and through the course of that process they may well still continue to have a role. They have both shown an interest in remaining involved, but they also appreciate there has been a number of decisions taken.

Mr MANDER: So when was the last time that advisory board came together for a meeting?

Mr Hopper: 2023.

Mr MANDER: 2023? So the changes have just been recently announced, so what—that advisory board has not met since 2023; is that what you are saying?

Mr Hopper: No, I am saying that there has been a number of changes, including the decision to make the QAS a statutory body, and since the change in leadership the advisory board has not met. You have already noted that the chair of the advisory board is no longer a member, and that is the position we find ourselves in.

Mr MANDER: Sorry, but I am just finding that a bit inconsistent. You have said that since the announcement was made about the statutory authority the group has not met, but you have said there is no need to meet but they have not met since 2023.

CHAIR: Member—

Mr MANDER: It is a clarification, Chair.

CHAIR: No, member. You have already received an answer from the director-general about your specific question. I think you are just repeating the question over and over again.

Mr MANDER: The answer in my opinion was inconsistent, so I am seeking clarification.

CHAIR: No, I disagree. I think you should move on.

Mr MANDER: Minister, when were you first aware that Ms Warr was no longer going to be in the position of CEO of QAS?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. Any questions in relation to the details of any public servant's employment is an operational matter and therefore the responsibility of the director-general.

Mr MANDER: That was not the question, Minister. When were you first aware that Ms Warr was no longer going to be in the position of CEO of QAS—an incredibly important position that comes under your realm?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. Any questions in relation to the details of any public servant's employment is an operational matter and therefore the responsibility of the director-general.

Mr MANDER: Minister, does it concern you that somebody who was so highly sought after and who was recruited by the Queensland government with the specific role of improving our medal prospects—

CHAIR: Order, member. You are seeking an opinion.

Mr MANDER: Does it concern you?

CHAIR: Excuse me?

Mr MANDER: That is what I am getting clarification on.

CHAIR: Yes, but you are seeking an opinion from the witness. Can you move on with the questions please.

Mr MANDER: Minister, did you approve the organisational changes that the director-general has since put into place since Ms Warr's departure?

Mr HEALY: They are operational matters and that is something that I will hand over to the director-general.

Mr MANDER: Minister, are you saying that as the minister in charge of sport and recreation you had no knowledge or did not give approval for Ms Warr's departure?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. Once again I will reiterate that any questions in relation to the details of any public servant's employment is an operational matter and therefore is the responsibility of the director-general.

Mr MANDER: Let me ask one more question, if I may.

CHAIR: Yes, understanding, member, that the minister may answer a question in whichever way they deem is appropriate and proper as long as it is relevant to the question.

Mr MANDER: I do understand that; thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: And so I think the minister has tried to answer that for you.

Mr MANDER: Not very well, but he has tried.

CHAIR: Excuse me? Order! Are you reflecting on the chair?

Mr MANDER: I did not say that. I was reflecting on the minister.

CHAIR: Are you reflecting on the chair?

Mr MANDER: I said I reflected on the minister.

CHAIR: Move on.

Mr MANDER: Minister, did you try to reach out to Ms Warr to find out why she suddenly decided to move on to other opportunities?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. Any question in relation to the details of a public servant's employment is an operational matter and, therefore, is the responsibility of the director-general. I will add to that that I had not met Ms Warr. Once again, this is the responsibility of the director-general.

Mr MANDER: Minister, are you asking the Queensland public and the elite sporting sector to believe that Ms Warr moved on to pursue other opportunities when it was blatantly obvious she was sacked?

CHAIR: Member, order! I made a ruling earlier in regards to repeated questions. You are repeating the question over and over again. Please move on or I will rule you out of order and warn you.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, Chair.

Mr HEALY: Chair, I am happy to answer that question. I thank the member for the question. Any question in relation to the details of any public servant's employment is an operational matter and, therefore, is the responsibility of the director-general.

Mr MANDER: I would be embarrassed as well. I would not answer it either.

CHAIR: Member, order! At least act civilly when you are here and actually ask some questions. Barking at the minister does not do you any favours. Next question.

Mr MANDER: I will come back to the director-general, if I may. I want to go back to the changes of governance structure, if I may. Can I just confirm that those changes were changes that you initiated and were not directed by the minister or anybody else? It was an internal governance change that you made yourself?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. Are you referring to—

Mr MANDER: Not the statutory authority decision; the first decision.

Mr Hopper: No, that was my decision and my decision alone.

Mr MANDER: It is my understanding that that was the structure before the previous CEO was appointed to the role of head of QAS.

Mr Hopper: That is my understanding also. That was the structure when the QAS athletes generated their record 31 medals in Tokyo; that is correct. I felt that that was the best structure to support stability at the QAS.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, what consultation occurred with the advisory board about those changes?

Mr Hopper: I had a conversation with the then chair of the advisory board.

Mr MANDER: Could you elaborate on what that conversation was?

Mr Hopper: Obviously I was making her aware of the changes.

Mr MANDER: So you advised her of the changes?

Mr Hopper: That is correct.

Mr MANDER: There was no consultation; you advised her of the changes.

Mr Hopper: I did. It is an advisory board, member.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, Director-General. Director-General, many within the elite sporting sector have publicly stated—people like Wayne Bennett, Peter Conde, Renita Garard—and viewed the decision that you made as one that diminished the role. Do you accept that characterisation?

Mr Hopper: You are asking for an opinion on their opinion. I do not have a position on that.

Mr MANDER: So you do not regard the changes that you made, changing a CEO to a general manager, as a diminution of that role?

Mr Hopper: My responsibility is to ensure that the QAS can fulfil its obligations and we were on the path to Paris. The decision I took was related to that.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, was there a review undertaken that led to the decisions that you made?

Mr Hopper: No there was not, member.

Mr MANDER: If there was no review, did it occur to you to undertake an independent review?

Mr Hopper: Could the member explain what I would be reviewing independently?

Mr MANDER: The structure of the organisation that would bring about the best results.

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. Based on the timing, in my opinion and in my experience the best way forward was the course of action that I took.

Mr MANDER: In hindsight, now that the Premier undertook an independent review and came up with the model of a separate statutory authority, would it not have been a good decision to make to have an independent review in the first place?

CHAIR: You are asking a hypothetical. Can you rephrase the question? You are asking a hypothetical.

Mr MANDER: I am stating—

CHAIR: No, you are asking a hypothetical.

Mr MANDER: I accept that, Chair. Minister, are you embarrassed that the findings of the Premier's review have basically been a 100 per cent reversal of the decisions made by the director-general with regards to the structure of the organisation?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. As I said earlier, on 12 July the Premier announced the Queensland Academy of Sport would transition to a statutory body. That was the finding of an independent review so it was not the Premier's suggestion or recommendation. I understand that there was a group of people who wanted to meet with the Premier. They met with the Premier. I was informed that an independent review would be conducted. As a result of that, the findings have since been released that we will be heading towards a statutory body. That is what I am aware of.

My goal and objective as the minister is to ensure that our elite athletes are getting the best coaches and the best infrastructure that they can get. We continue to do that with our significant investment in that area. The independent review indicated that this was going to be a more effective way of doing it so I think it is a good thing. I think, moving forward, we know we are going to need to see some greater opportunities across our state. That is why we have a vast array of initiatives run by the QAS. I am confident that as we move towards those we will make the organisation leaner, meaner and more efficient.

CHAIR: I give the call to the member for Nicklin.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the Department of Tourism and Sport SDS and referencing the \$33.5 million increase to the FairPlay vouchers, can you provide an update on the program?

Mr HEALY: I certainly can. I thank the member for the question. I have to say that at the heart of Queensland's sporting success is grassroots participation and most of us would understand that. It is mums and dads getting their kids out there on the weekend to be active and, more importantly, to build a healthy lifestyle. I truly believe in the power of sport and fostering a passion for sport and recreation and all the physical and mental health benefits lifelong participation can bring. I would like to thank the member for Burnett who encouraged me as I headed off to the swimming pool today to do my lunchtime laps. That encouragement was much needed, I can tell you, particularly around the 250-metre mark.

Through the recent state budget, the Queensland government is working to support all Queenslanders to live a healthier and more active lifestyle through participating in sport whether at community, organised or elite levels. The Miles government's 2024 state budget provided an additional and unprecedented \$33.5 million to increase the FairPlay voucher value from \$150 to \$200 and expand the eligibility to all Queensland kids between five and 17 years. Previously, the vouchers had only been available to families with healthcare cards.

When the expanded program opened on 1 July, we saw record levels of interest from Queensland families, with 30,000 vouchers being snapped up in the first two hours. I commend everybody. From a digital perspective we were all a little concerned about how that was going to go but it went extremely well. Over 186,000 vouchers were claimed in the first two weeks, prompting the Premier to announce, on 14 July, that FairPlay would be further expanded with another 100,000 vouchers available. That major boost brings the total number of vouchers on offer to 300,000 and is a \$60 million investment in Queensland kids. As of today, more than 221,000 vouchers have been claimed. That means more Queensland families can save money on their kids' sports memberships, registration and, just as importantly, participation fees. The FairPlay program is designed to address cost-of-living pressures that are making it harder for families and young Queenslanders to take part in sport and active recreation and we know how vitally important that is. The vouchers help reduce the cost of sports memberships, registration and participation fees.

There are 50,000 vouchers reserved for eligible healthcare card and concession card holders to ensure vulnerable families do not miss out on this fantastic opportunity. The \$200 vouchers can be cashed in anytime this financial year. I know how important this program is. This is an investment in the back pockets of Queensland's parents. More importantly, it is an investment in the health of Queensland kids. We are doing what matters for Queenslanders by providing cost-of-living relief. These savings will mean kids will not have to miss out on sports that I have no doubt they love to play. Playing sport and having an active lifestyle is an important aspect of who we are as Queenslanders and it should not be limited to just those who can afford it or take part in it.

Ms LUI: Minister, in relation to page 8 of the DTS SDS and the reference to the clean-up and repair after disaster events, could you provide an update on disaster funding support for affected sport and recreation clubs following Cyclone Jasper?

Mr HEALY: I can, and I thank the member for the question. As I did earlier, I acknowledge that it was your electorate, member for Cook, that was heavily impacted, and your representation of your constituents was nothing short of impressive. I am pleased to announce today the opening of the Australian and Queensland governments' \$14.8 million Sport and Recreation Community Facilities Recovery Program. This is really important. It is absolutely something that the community has been asking for, and this has come through as a result of a process of consultation. This will boost support for eligible sport and active recreation organisations and local governments hardest hit by ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper and the south Queensland severe storms and rainfall.

The \$12 million Sport and Recreation Recovery Grant provides eligible organisations with funding between \$20,000 and \$1 million to assist with clean-up efforts, repair or replacement of equipment and facilities directly damaged by these disasters. It is targeted to eligible organisations located in the eight local government areas severely impacted by ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper. We are talking about Cairns, the Cassowary Coast, Cook, Douglas, Mareeba, Tablelands, Wujal Wujal and Yarrabah—some of the most beautiful parts of our state.

Additionally, eligible organisations located in three local government areas activated for assistance under the south Queensland severe storms and rainfall event will be able to apply. That is the Gold Coast to Logan and the Scenic Rim. When these disasters took place, I was down there meeting with tourism operators—I also met with sporting organisations—and the damage was significant.

The Sport and Recreation Community Facilities Recovery Program is jointly funded through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and will be administered by the Department of Tourism and Sport. The latest grant program follows the Queensland government's Sport and Recreation Disaster Recovery Program, which was made available shortly after the summer events, with funding of up to \$5,000 for immediate clean-up and to re-establish facilities and activities. More than 250 organisations have received support through this program, I understand, to date.

The Queensland government is committed to getting our sport and active recreation organisations back on their feet and operating as they were before being impacted by the summer weather events. An important part of Queensland's lifestyle is sport and active recreation, as we all know. It is imperative that our clubs and sporting organisations are up and running for the communities that they serve. We understand how important they are to the fabric of our community.

This funding will ensure a speedier recovery and get Queenslanders in impacted areas back to sport and back to being active. This assistance is part of the Australian and Queensland governments' joint investment of more than \$156 million for Far North Queensland and more than \$73 million for south Queensland in exceptional disaster assistance packages through the disaster relief fund. The majority of this has come about as a result of people advocating—organisations, individuals and members of parliament—to ensure that we got this sporting infrastructure up and running.

CHAIR: Minister, in relation to page 2 of the DTS SDS and the mention of FairPlay, can you provide an update on the SwimStart program?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I was recently in the Hervey Bay area, where we saw the direct benefits of this. It is a fantastic program. I am pleased to announce that eligible young Queensland children will have better access to swimming lessons with the opening of round 2 of the Miles government's highly popular SwimStart program. This is a fantastic initiative. Families experiencing cost-of-living pressures will be able to stretch the household budget further, with the value of the vouchers up to \$150 for each eligible child. SwimStart is designed to improve water safety for children up to the age of four years. This initiative makes swimming lessons definitely more affordable.

During round 1 of the program, more than 9,000 vouchers were issued, with over 5,400 vouchers redeemed across Queensland, ensuring that more than 5,400 young Queenslanders are now better prepared for water activities. The Queensland government has committed \$9.76 million up to June 2025 to support SwimStart. Students in primary schools will continue to receive swimming lessons as part of their water safety and swimming education program. Swimming squad training and coaching with registered not-for-profit providers continues to be available through the Queensland government's FairPlay program for children aged from five years to 17 years.

Spending time in and around water is at the heart of our lifestyle here in Queensland, whether it be on our beaches, in our creeks or in our rivers. Learning how to swim is almost a fundamental requirement. It is one of the most important skills we can teach our kids. That is why the Queensland government is delivering the SwimStart program.

Lessons are not cheap, especially for families doing it tough, so vouchers valued up to \$150 help to bring swimming lessons to within reach for the youngest of Queenslanders. Like our enormously successful FairPlay program, SwimStart is designed to help break down financial barriers for families doing their best to manage cost-of-living pressures. This fantastic initiative gives kids the best start at learning to swim, especially as the summer will be on us before we know it. I encourage all eligible families to apply for the SwimStart vouchers and give their kids vital skills that they will take with them through the journey of life.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 2 of the Department of Tourism and Sport Service Delivery Statements and the reference to \$9.5 million for the sport Minor Infrastructure Program, could you provide an update on the program?

Mr HEALY: I can indeed, and I thank the member for the question. Sporting clubs and active recreation organisations across North Queensland are set to deliver infrastructure for their communities with \$9.5 million allocated from the state budget for the Minor Infrastructure Program. This funding has been put to immediate use, supporting 50 shovel-ready projects identified earlier this year through the most recent round of the Minor Infrastructure and Inclusive Facilities Fund, which received a high volume of quality applications. That include clubs like the Hervey Bay Bowls Club, where I was pleased to join the chair last month to announce they were the recipients of \$200,000-plus to replace the shade shelters—and they were very happy about that, Chair. The club members were very pleased and any new infrastructure, I think, is a positive thing.

Member for Nicklin, \$235,438 will go towards installing lights at the Palmwoods Warriors Football Club. What an intimidating name! I hope the club's improvement is going to be good thing for them. In your area, member for Maiwar, the Fig Tree Pocket Equestrian Club, which no doubt you have been advocating for, has received \$162,871 to upgrade their arena.

There are numerous clubs in your electorate, member for Cook, receiving funding: \$273,739 for lighting at the Weipa BMX Club, which I have been to—it is a fantastic and well-used piece of public infrastructure; \$435,750 for the Torres Strait council to construct outdoor activity space on Horn Island, which is terrific; \$181,333 for lighting for the Mareeba Rugby League Club, who are doing well, I believe; and \$90,000-plus to replace flooring at the Mareeba Gymnastics Club.

Other great projects across the state include: \$257,813 for the Kawana Waters Swimming Club to install submersible swim walls; \$262,500 for the Gold Coast Pickleball Association—I know there is somebody in this room would love to hear that—to construct shade shelters at Currumbin; and \$262,500 for the Maroochydore Football Club to upgrade lighting at their park.

The state budget is ensuring that the wonderful Queensland lifestyle, including playing sport and being active, is maintained for local families. We know this sort of investment is essential to get infrastructure where it can be very effective. Clubs throughout Queensland are very much at the heart and soul of our communities, and as a regional minister I know how important they are. You do not just have to be regional; this is vitally important as we move forward not only for young and developing Queenslanders but also our older Queenslanders. It is essential that we continue to make infrastructure more inclusive. By improving this infrastructure our clubs will attract more community members to participate and, more importantly, be more active, helping our sporting clubs and active recreation organisations deliver new and upgraded infrastructure projects sooner. This is what Queenslanders are looking for.

Mr MANDER: Minister, were you aware that the former CEO of QAS, an internationally highly respected and high performance leader, consistently advised since she started at the QAS that the entity should become a statutory authority, and it was not until the Premier intervened that that decision was finally arrived at?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. That was before my time.

Mr MANDER: You were not aware?

Mr HEALY: I was not aware.

Mr MANDER: Minister, how long will it take for the Academy of Sport to be transformed into an independent statutory authority?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I am seeking advice on that. I have asked to have a look at that. I will hand over to the director-general. I understand the Premier indicated that it could take up to two years, but I will ask the director-general if he has anything to add to that.

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. Outside of the Premier's statements, we are working to understand the process to transition the QAS to a statutory body. At this stage we cannot confirm whether it will take two years or less, but we are in the process of doing that. That process will come into effect on the other side of Paris.

Mr MANDER: Minister, will the department lead the transition work?

Mr HEALY: My understanding is that the department will lead the transition work; that is correct.

Mr MANDER: Minister, coming back to the potential two-year period, I have received advice that this is a reasonably unremarkable transition and should not take longer than six months. Do you have any comment about that?

Mr HEALY: As I have said, at this stage we are still looking into it. This has been a relatively recent decision. At the moment, we are enjoying the hard work of the QAS recipients. I am confident moving forward that as we get a little closer and a little bit more detail, we will be able to make a more informed decision as to the duration of that transition.

Mr MANDER: Minister, are you aware that those in the high-performance sporting sector are concerned that it could be argued that those people who were supportive of the former model are now responsible for the transition to the new model? Does that concern you at all?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I think that is more of an opinion. There are a few models. Which model are we talking about?

Mr MANDER: You could argue that the reason for the statutory authority being decided by the Premier is that it is a more effective and better model than what is currently in place. There are many in the sector who are concerned that those who were responsible for the model that is being replaced are responsible for the new model and they may not do that with great enthusiasm. Are you concerned about that?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. Whatever decision people make in a range of areas you will always have pros and cons. I want to reassure the people of Queensland, particularly those in the elite athlete area, that we are a government that will continue to invest. I want to reinforce an earlier point. This was not a decision of the Premier; this is an independent body that made a recommendation to the Premier, and as a result that is the direction we are now headed. We want to do this as quickly as possible. We want to do it with as little disruption to the athletes as possible because we are preparing ourselves. Now we are heading towards not only Los Angeles but also, obviously, the inevitable—the Brisbane games. We want to make sure that we have the best facility. We want to make sure it is well funded and we want to make sure it has the best people there. From my perspective, this will be the decision of executive government and it will always be implemented by the department that is responsible. We will take that responsibility and we will do it effectively and as efficiently as we can.

Mr MANDER: Minister, do you concede it is unlikely that the academy will be able to recruit somebody of the same calibre of Ms Warr again in the near future?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I think that is hypothetical. There are an enormous number of highly skilled people around the world. I do get it that it is an elite club. We run one of the best academies in the world. I am confident that when the position becomes vacant we will have some great people applying. That also will apply to the chair's position when we are looking at the board. If things go well and I am still in this position, my goal and objective is no different to yours or anybody else sitting around this table or any other Queenslanders. We want to make sure we have the best people and a well-funded organisation. As we move towards some fairly iconic dates, we want to make sure we are well equipped for the future.

Mr MANDER: Minister, has the process to transition to the statutory authority begun?

Mr HEALY: I might direct that to the director-general.

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. The process of identifying the steps to move to a statutory body has begun. So yes, the process has commenced.

Mr MANDER: Minister, who will be on the recruitment panel for the selection of the new CEO?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I do not think we are up to that stage yet, but as soon as we are I will let you know.

Mr MANDER: I will wait with bated breath.

Mr HEALY: You are not thinking of applying, are you?

Mr MANDER: I do not qualify. Director-General, what involvement has the department had with respect to the project validation report being prepared around the QSAC facility?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. The facility itself is managed by Stadiums Queensland. Our involvement is negligible.

Mr MANDER: Have there been discussions with the department with regard to what would happen with the QAS during the transition period of rebuild?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. These questions are probably best directed to the Department of State Development and Infrastructure, which is leading that process. At this stage we are not the asset owner. Stadiums Queensland is the asset owner. As the PVR work comes to a conclusion I am sure a lot of those aspects will be considered and addressed.

Mr MANDER: I will go to the CEO of Stadiums Queensland. I will ask the same question: what involvement have you had with respect to the project validation report being prepared around the QSAC facility?

Mr Harris: We have been involved in discussions with the previous entity, the Olympic planning authority. That has now transitioned from 1 July across to the games venue delivery authority. As the asset owner, we are consulted and requested to support inspections and provide information around operational context. Effectively, it is in its infancy in terms of the establishment of that new delivery authority, and that is really what is occurring to date. As recent as yesterday, there was a site inspection from members of the delivery authority at QSAC. Our team facilitated movement around the site and provided responses to any questions that were asked. I was not present for the inspection but certainly it is very recent.

Mr MANDER: Are you aware of any discussions around the QAS's future with regard to where it may be situated?

Mr Harris: Internally, absolutely. The QAS is the key partner onsite with us. They have been onsite at that venue for a number of years. We initiated conversations with them, as we have done with all partners across our portfolio, and started early discussions around what potential displacement or disruption could look like. At this early stage, though, without any scoping of what works would be intended and then equally any scheduling that would come with those works, we are really talking hypotheticals. Certainly, we would work with the delivery authority and we would work with the QAS and any of our other sports partners. They are one of a number that are onsite at that venue. We would try to minimise disruption and advise the delivery authority the best we possibly could about the best way to go about scheduling any works.

Mr MANDER: So it is too early to talk about other options or cost of relocation? Those types of discussions have not occurred as yet?

Mr Harris: No.

CHAIR: Member, that is actually probably not a question. As the CEO indicated, you are bordering on hypotheticals and asking for opinions.

Mr MANDER: With respect, Chair, that was a question about whether these have happened or not.

CHAIR: You are just following on from a question that was already considered. I let it run but I consider that your line of questioning is becoming really hypothetical.

Mr MANDER: Thank you for your grace. I really appreciate it.

Mr Harris: I am happy to respond, Chair.

Mr MANDER: Because it is a reasonable question. Thank you.

CHAIR: Are you reflecting on the chair?

Mr MANDER: No, I am not.

CHAIR: Are you reflecting on the chair?

Mr MANDER: No, I am not.

Mr Harris: Member, in terms of QAS or QSAC, it is well and truly too early to make any determinations around that. Having said that, I reference what we do on a regular basis. We relocated the Brisbane Broncos from Suncorp Stadium last year when the FIFA World Cup occurred at that venue. We hosted eight matches at that venue and it was during the window of the regular football season. We used the efficiencies of our portfolio to relocate the Broncos across to the Gabba without any disruption. They played three home matches. It is fairly regular that we would hold those sorts of discussions across our portfolio and look to try to use the portfolio as much as possible to minimise any disruption to athletes or users.

Mr MANDER: Thank you. Chair, I would like to ask my next question to the director-general. Prehearing question on notice No. 18 identifies that the amount of funding available through the Active Industry Fund decreased from \$19.243 million in 2021-2023 to \$16.975 million in the 2023-2025 period. Why was that funding source reduced?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. For that detail I will hand over to the deputy director-general.

Mr Sly: The department had not changed its funding model for state sporting bodies for a number of years. The department consulted with state sporting bodies for many months on what that future funding model should look like. The overwhelming majority of state sporting bodies' feedback was that they wanted a change to the existing funding model. The previous funding model was inclusive of governance, capability and participation. The funding has not been cut; the funding has been cut up differently. There is actually more money for state sporting bodies than there was previously.

You are correct that the Active Industry Fund in 2021-2023 was \$19.234 million, through question on notice No. 18. The Active Industry Base Fund was born for the years 2023-2025 at \$16.975 million. That now only covers capability and governance. On top of that, the Active Industry Project Fund is \$5.072 million, for a total of more than \$21 million—nearly \$22 million. There is actually more funding for state sporting bodies; it is just broken up differently into participation versus governance and capability.

Mr MANDER: Thank you. Director-General, how many sporting groups saw their annual funding reduced overall from the Active Industry Fund and any other funding source? How many sporting groups would now receive less money than they did under the previous methodology?

Mr Hopper: Thank you, member. I will ask the deputy director-general to answer the question.

Mr Sly: That is a multifaceted question. It is in the *Hansard* from this hearing last year when the answer was given at the end of the hearing in terms of the Active Industry Base Fund. It is a matter of the public record already. Can I just get you to repeat the second part?

Mr MANDER: Can you tell me which sports have had their funding reduced?

Mr Sly: That is already a matter of the public record from the *Hansard* from this hearing last year.

Mr MANDER: Would you mind telling me again?

Mr Sly: I do not have it with me but it is a matter of the public record if we can get that. It is already in *Hansard*.

Mr MANDER: Thank you.

Mr Sly: The second question about overall funding—

Mr MANDER: No, that is fine. I appreciate that, thank you. Director-General, a number of sporting groups raised their concerns about reduced funding. Little Athletics and Gymnastics Queensland were some of those organisations. Has the department met with those groups to work out their concerns?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. The deputy director-general may add further detail in due course. As it relates to gymnastics, which I think was the first sport you mentioned, I can confirm that under the previous Active Industry Fund from 2021-2023 the Queensland Gymnastics Association received \$600,000. Under the new funding arrangements, the Queensland Gymnastics Association will receive \$750,000 for 2023-2025, which is a \$150,000 increase.

As it relates to Little Athletics, they are not recognised by the Australian Sports Commission as the state-level sporting organisation. The Queensland Athletic Association is the recognised body. I can confirm that under the previous Active Industry Fund from 2021-2023 the Queensland Athletic Association Ltd received \$390,000. Under the new funding arrangements, the Queensland Athletic Association Ltd will receive \$572,500 for 2023-2025, a \$182,500 increase.

I can confirm that under the previous Active Industry Fund for 2021-2023 Queensland Little Athletics received \$210,000. Under the new funding arrangements, Queensland Little Athletics will receive \$177,500 for 2023-2025, despite the fact that they are not recognised as a state-level body. Do you wish the deputy director-general to add to that?

Mr MANDER: I am satisfied with that answer, thank you. I have a question to Mr Harris, if I may. What involvement did Stadiums Queensland have in the Quirk review?

Mr Harris: I thank the member for the question. We were quite heavily consulted. As the asset owner, the Quirk review assessed the games master plan that was in place at that time. We participated and were asked to participate in a number of meetings with the review panel. We facilitated site inspections, at the request of the review panel, to the Gabba, QSAC, Sleeman Sports Complex and Suncorp—they did not travel north—and they did do inspections on the Gold Coast at the two Gold Coast venues.

Mr MANDER: Did Stadiums Queensland make a submission in support of QSAC being included as part of the key Olympic Games infrastructure?

Mr Harris: Stadiums Queensland provided a submission to the Quirk review which is referenced in the appendix of that review.

Mr MANDER: Can you save me remembering what was in that report? Was there a submission in support of QSAC?

Mr Harris: Our submission did not reference any of the venues themselves specifically. What the submission addressed was the need for tier 1 sporting infrastructure in Queensland, including tier 1 oval stadium infrastructure, athletics infrastructure and aquatic infrastructure.

Mr MANDER: CEO, how much has Stadiums Queensland expended over the last three financial years in preparing for the Gabba to be the key Olympic stadium in Queensland?

Mr Harris: Expenditure in terms of—

Mr MANDER: In preparing for the Gabba. How much has Stadiums Queensland spent in any preparations for making Gabba the primary Olympic stadium, which was announced a number of times by the government?

Mr Harris: I thank the member for the question. What I can give you is the maintenance expenditure and the capital expenditure that has been applied by our organisation relating to the operation of that venue. The investment that is required for enhancements to the Gabba is not a matter for our organisation; it is a matter that previously was to be addressed through the Olympic planning infrastructure authority and now obviously has transferred across to the games venue delivery authority.

Mr MANDER: So Stadiums Queensland did not expend any additional money with regard to preparing the Gabba to be the Olympic stadium?

Mr Harris: That is correct. Our expenditure solely relates to the day-to-day operation and maintenance and any capital requirements, or capital replacement requirements particularly. Many parts of that venue are approaching 40 years of age, so things like air conditioners, lifts and those sorts of things are where money would be applied, but not in relation to any redevelopment.

Mr MANDER: That is a good segue. Can you advise what the current end of life is for the Gabba?

Mr Harris: I thank the member for the question. The Gabba was redeveloped from 1995 through until 2006 over six stages, so there is not a date that the venue is functional for and then the next day it instantly becomes non-functional. Our job as the operator and the owner of the venue is to ensure we maintain its currency as a tier 1 oval venue. That is what we have done since we have been established. Obviously, as the assets become older over the life there is a greater need for capital investment. The project validation report that is on public record talked about the significant investment that would be required to bring that up to Olympic standards.

CHAIR: Member, you have about 1½ minutes.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, on 1 December last year the government made an announcement around the RNA showgrounds being a replacement venue for cricket and AFL during the Gabba rebuild. Am I right in saying that that option is now completely off the cards?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. I think the Quirk review has taken us beyond that point in time.

CHAIR: I turn to the member for South Brisbane.

Dr MacMAHON: My question is for the CEO of Stadiums Queensland. The government said there would be modest enhancements at the Gabba stadium, saying that ‘future works at the Gabba are expected to impact the school’—being East Brisbane State school—and that the government ‘will work closely with the school community as those plans develop’. Are you able to detail what future modest enhancements are planned for the Gabba?

Mr Harris: I thank the member for the question. Somewhat similar to the advice I have provided to the member, the scoping of the enhancements is still being undertaken and it is being undertaken by the games venue delivery authority. We will obviously be involved in those conversations. When the extent of those works is understood, that would be the time we would sit with the various parties that could be affected and work through the scheduling and understand as best as possible how we would minimise any disruption.

Dr MacMAHON: What advice has Stadiums Queensland given the games venue delivery authority about what you anticipate would need to be done to the Gabba?

Mr Harris: Again, similar to the previous questions around QSAC, there are inspections that are occurring around the Gabba, QSAC and Suncorp Stadium. It is on the public record, obviously, that the three venues fall within the bucket of expenditure. We are supporting the delivery authority in terms of those inspections but also providing documentation that we have within our remit that helps inform the level of investment that would be required—what areas, where that investment should be made and how money would best be applied to modest enhancements at that site.

Dr MacMAHON: Are you able to detail any of those particular recommendations that you have made?

Mr Harris: I thank the member for the question. I would not say we have made recommendations; we have provided information and supported inspections and participated in discussions. Ultimately, the decisions around what will be applied at that venue—when, where and how—will be a matter for the delivery authority.

Dr MacMAHON: Do you have any particular priorities for what Stadiums Queensland would like to see for the Gabba?

Mr Harris: Again, thank you for the question. Our focus always across our portfolio, whether it be stadia investment or community high-performance sport, is that we offer facilities that are contemporary, fit for purpose, very functional for the users and very fan focused. We would like to see the best distribution of funds to ensure we can actually meet those needs and ensure our venues are world-class and represent Queensland as they should in the national and world landscape.

Dr MacMAHON: Thank you. My understanding is that the upgrades that you have mentioned from 1995 to 2006 went ahead without any disruption to the school and the school certainly was not closed or relocated for those upgrades. Do you have information about how that was able to proceed that could be applied to the future upgrades to the Gabba?

Mr Harris: Again, I thank the member for the question. It was well and truly before my time; however, I understand, as I have referenced, that the venue was redeveloped over six stages and I think that was a key factor in minimising disruption for the sports users and for the surrounding community as well. Obviously, that would need to be assessed. It is an incredibly constrained site—literally within an island of four significant roads. How you would schedule significant works will be a key factor in the decisions, I am sure, by the delivery authority. We would best inform them about how you could go about that.

Dr MacMAHON: Thank you. Minister, given that upgrades to the Gabba are expected to impact the school, have you had the chance to visit the school or speak with staff and parents?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I have actually visited the school. I have not spoken to staff or parents. I think once we get a good indication what impact there will be or what that may look like, I think that would be something I would be prepared to do. I think that would be sensible and I think the more than reasonable thing. As soon as we know what that looks like, I would be happy to do that.

Dr MacMAHON: Is there is a way to ensure that any future upgrades are done in such a way that the school gets to maintain its position in that site and to make that a key criteria for any decisions that are made around the Gabba going forward? Is that a possibility?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. What I would say to that is that would be the job of the delivery authority. In May this year we passed legislation to establish the Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority. This is delivering on a promise from the Premier that we need to draw a line

in the sand and we need to establish these very important organisations. Their job will be to deliver new and upgraded venues that will be used during the games. I will make the assumption that during that process, what you are asking could be fed into that. I am quite sure there would be a process of consultation with community, and I would make the assumption that around that time you would be able to do that. It would not be something that would come out of the Department of Tourism and Sport; the Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority would be responsible for that.

Mr BERKMAN: Minister, in my local community, I think it is fair to say, most sporting clubs are dealing with space constraints. That is the main constraint on additional membership and, in a lot of cases, they are having to restrict memberships in a variety of age groups because they just do not have both the playing fields and the training space. I appreciate that a lot of these facilities are leased off council and that provision of green space is largely a council responsibility, but can you offer any insight into what the department is doing or might be able to do in the future to deal with these very space constrained communities and the need for playing fields?

Mr HEALY: I do hear that a lot. I thank the member for the question. Fundamentally the provision of land for sport and recreation is primarily, as you have indicated, the responsibility of local government. However, as outlined in question on notice 19, the Department of Tourism and Sport has recently administered three separate infrastructure funding programs with the aim of enhancing community sport and active recreation participation opportunities through the provision of spaces that enable quality, accessible, inclusive and safe and more efficient activity. We know that is important. We know that there is demand out there.

Across the three programs, we have approved 416 projects with a total funding, I understand, of over \$770 million. These projects include new and upgraded playing surfaces, fields, courts, tracks, new and upgraded field and playing lighting, new and upgraded change rooms and amenities, improved irrigation and drainage, and upgraded spectator viewing areas. All these things need to be enhanced because we are a growing city. These infrastructure projects enhance participation opportunities and expand the capacity and quality of sport and recreation facilities. The funding has supported facilities across 59 local government areas, including 12 high-growth areas in South-East Queensland, and they were approved for a total funding amount of just under \$38 million for over 207 projects.

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you, Minister. Further to that response, does the department have any specific funding allocated for land acquisition? I appreciate the nature of those projects and the financial support you have identified, but it strikes me that the key barrier for most of these sporting clubs and perhaps even for councils is the acquisition of land just to start any of those projects?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. As far as I know, we do not have funding. Tourism and sport just does not have funding for the acquisition of land. I totally hear where you are coming from. It is a challenge for a growing city. However, the answer to the question is unfortunately we do not have funding in this space for the acquisition of land. We have funding for a lot of other things, but not for land.

Mr BERKMAN: I will finish by noting I did join the Fig Tree Pocket Equestrian Club a few weeks ago for their 50th anniversary. It was a fabulous day and they very much welcome the extra funding.

Mr HEALY: I am very happy to hear that.

CHAIR: You have three minutes, member.

Mr BERKMAN: That is all for my questions, Chair. I am happy for the opposition to take this time if they are inclined.

Mr MANDER: I am happy to.

CHAIR: Absolutely. Member for Everton.

Mr MANDER: To Mr Harris from Stadiums Queensland, in relation to Stadiums Queensland contract disclosure log—there was a bit of confusion last year; my fault—would the CEO be able to provide the total value of the contracts for this financial year, please?

Mr Harris: I thank the member for the question. I will try to dig that up and come back to you before the end of this session.

Mr MANDER: Would you also mind finding out how that compares to the previous three financial years as well? Thank you.

Mr Harris: Sure.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, there seems to be a significant underspend of \$28.7 million on the Browne Park redevelopment project in Rockhampton. Can you explain whether that is true and why?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. It is not so much an underspend but a timing issue of the spend. The timing of the spend has been aligned with project milestones. That means the money is obviously changing in financial years.

Mr MANDER: Further to that, has the time line of the project now been extended?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. The end of September 2025 is the scheduled completion date.

Mr MANDER: Could you elaborate on the cost escalations associated with that project to date, noting that the original investment was for \$25 million, but that has since more than doubled?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. I will turn that over to the deputy director-general to speak to the detail.

Mr Sly: Member, there have been a number of well-documented cost escalations not only across this project, but many projects, thanks to material escalations basically. I would note that it has been incredibly important to get to the right outcome not only for the Browne Park Trust and the teams that play there, but moreover for the people of Queensland, for Queensland Rugby League and the game of Rugby League, so the department has taken its time to get it right. We have an excellent head contractor in Hutchinson Builders. In the department's view, the outcome in terms of 70 per cent of the contract amount going to the local community within 125 kilometres with a significant spend of at least \$1.4 million on Indigenous business delivering additional benefits, that was the right outcome for the right time to get to the right outcome for the project.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, despite the doubling of the budget, can you confirm whether the capacity of the stadium has increased as well?

Mr Hopper: I thank the member for the question. I will get the deputy director-general to answer.

Mr Sly: Member, the capacity of the stadium will increase approximately from 5,000 to 7,000 as part of this first stage.

CHAIR: I will give the call to the member for Nicklin.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, page 2 of the Service Delivery Statements refers to the Queensland Academy of Sport inspiring extraordinary sporting success. Can the minister provide an update on the performance of QAS athletes at the Paris games?

Mr HEALY: I want to begin by thanking the member for the question. I am sure, as some of the banter has already identified, a number of us have been enjoying the amazing performance of Australian and Queensland athletes at the Paris Olympic Games. May I add, to all athletes, that I never thought that the host of *The Today Show* would get me teary or even a Woolworths ad, but they seem to be doing their job. There is quite an emotional attachment. I love it. Like most Queenslanders, we absolutely love the Olympics and our sport. Talking specifically about the Queensland Academy of Sport, so far we have seen nine medals from Queensland athletes, including four golds, which is terrific. A big shout-out to QAS supported athlete, Emma McKeon, who has now won more gold medals than any Australian athlete over their career to date which I think is absolutely fantastic. The Australian team consists of 460 Olympic athletes. As we mentioned earlier, 142 Olympic athletes, or more than 31 per cent of the Australian team selected to compete in Paris, are Queenslanders.

Thirty-six expert staff from the Queensland Academy of Sport were selected by the Australian Olympic Committee and Paralympics Australia to go to Paris. There is no greater appointment than this, so it really does indicate how well the QAS is going. This is a terrific achievement and it acknowledges the enormous expertise the Queensland Academy of Sport have recruited and, more importantly, have developed over recent years. These things do not just happen. As the Paralympic Games do not kick off until 28 August, selections for the Paralympic team are still being finalised. As a part of its 2032 High Performance Sports Strategy, the Queensland Academy of Sport set out a very ambitious mission—to enable Queensland's best-ever medal contribution. The Australian Olympic and Paralympic swim team is made up of 72 per cent and 73 per cent of Queensland athletes respectively, which I think is terrific. This includes superstars Mollie O'Callaghan and young Ms Titmus, who has been swimming extremely fast and who has continued to produce amazing performances. These athletes have already become multi-medallists in Paris along with Kaylee McKeown who defended her 100m backstroke title overnight. What an impressive race! At the halfway mark you thought she would be out of it, but she absolutely powered home—that was fantastic.

Numerous Queensland athletes contesting action sports have had good representation leading up to the games including skateboarders such as the Tokyo gold medallist Keegan Palmer, Cairns-born Arisa Trew and of course, Chloe Covell who has already competed. The Tokyo gold medal BMX freestyle athlete Logan Martin will return to defend his title. I understand that will be on tonight. In team sports, the women's Rugby Sevens team, consisting of six Queenslanders, had an outstanding tournament despite a heartbreaking finish. That was tough to watch, but Maddison Levi was impressive, setting a new Olympic record by scoring 14 tries in six games—absolutely remarkable. Whilst on the Paris site, the wheelchair rugby team, with seven Queensland athletes selected, are currently ranked No. 1 in the world so we are punching well above our weight. We are on track to achieve our best Olympic and Paralympic performance ever. I want to congratulate each one of those athletes but, more importantly—or just as importantly—everyone who helped them, from their mums and dads to their coaches and their friends. It is a great effort by all.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 9 of the Department of Tourism and Sport Service Delivery Statements and the reference to Stadiums Queensland, could you provide an update on the recent public consultation on the Suncorp Stadium concert cap?

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for the question. I am very happy to report some of the details which are quite positive. We know that Suncorp Stadium is the premier rectangular stadium in the world and the spiritual home of Rugby League in Queensland. It is one of the preferred concert venues in Australia for some of the biggest touring acts in the world, with the likes of Sir Paul McCartney, U2, Ed Sheeran, 'Guns N' Roses and Pink having entertained crowds there over the years. To support our strong economic recovery after the impacts from COVID, and after hearing from Queenslanders, we opened up Suncorp Stadium for twice as many concerts in 2023 and 2024, on a temporary basis, up from six to 12 concerts per year.

Off the back of holding increased costs on a temporary basis over the last few years, in February and March this year, we conducted public consultation on a permanent increase to 12 concerts. Public consultation is vitally important. We know that, and that is why we made that investment. A clear majority of the 442 respondents were in favour of the proposals—81.3 per cent of all respondents and 75.6 per cent of respondents who live within the Lang Park traffic area either agreed or strongly agreed that Suncorp Stadium should be permitted to hold up to 12 concerts per calendar year, while 84 per cent of all respondents, and 75.6 of respondents who live in the Lang Park area, agreed or strongly agreed that Suncorp Stadium should be permitted to hold up to 24 major sporting events per calendar year defined as a 'national or international sport event that has a crowd size greater than 45,000 people'. This overwhelmingly positive feedback means that even more world-class concerts will be hosted at Suncorp Stadium this summer. It is our goal and objective to be able to do that. Next year, more major sports events will be hosted, like the men's British & Irish Lions Tour.

The public was also recently consulted on a proposal to regulate concerts at the Carrara stadium and CBUS stadium on the Gold Coast and to allow concerts to operate until 10.30 pm instead of the 10.00 pm curfew. Of the 170 responses that were received, 83.3 per cent of all respondents and 78.1 per cent of respondents living near the stadium either agreed or strongly agreed that Carrara stadium should continue to be permitted to host concerts up until 10.30 pm, while 83.4 per cent of all respondents and 80.6 per cent of respondents living near the stadium either agreed or strongly agreed that CBUS Super Stadium should be permitted to hold concerts until 10.30 pm. While a small number of respondents raised concerns about the noise and changes to traffic conditions that concerts can cause, the Department of Tourism and Sport continues to work closely with Stadiums Queensland and stadium operators to ensure noise and traffic management processes continue to be effectively managed so these impacts can be lessened. The department is currently considering its next steps, including any recommended legislation or regulation changes which may be required.

I want to say in closing that this is very important. As we head towards our Olympic date, we want to make sure that we continue to get these fantastic events. These events are great for our tourism economy. They are great events for people to go to and we want to make sure that we not only have the infrastructure but we have the support of the people around these stadiums because it is a good thing for Queensland.

CHAIR: Thank you, minister. I think that just about wraps us up, or close to it. I note, minister, that there were some outstanding questions. Do you have answers for the committee? There were two questions—one was the Stadiums Queensland question by the member for Everton.

Mr Harris: Thank you for the question. The contractor expenditure estimated for financial year 2023-24—obviously we were closing our accounts out—was \$1,114,938. The actual in 2023 was \$963,710. The actual in 2022 was \$1,273,870 and the actual in 2021 was \$1,160,459.

CHAIR: There was another outstanding question from the member for Everton in regard to active industry funding.

Mr Sly: From the Hansard from this hearing last year—

In June 2023, the department approved \$16.577 million through the Active Industry Base Fund 2023-2025 in June 2023, the department approved 16.577 million through the active industry base fund 2023-25. I note also that transitional arrangements have been put in place and that the Active Industry Base Fund was determined by including comparisons of applicants' participation levels, statewide delivery as measured by the presence of affiliates across local government areas and human resources. I also note it is the first time it had been re-evaluated since 2016. Under that program, there were 45 decreases of between \$1,400 and \$130,000, and 28 increases of between \$1,500 and \$87,000.

Last year we noted that we would publish that funding on open data and that was done by the department.

CHAIR: Thank you, deputy-director. I will defer to the deputy chair who has a point of clarification to raise.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, would you be kind enough to deal quickly with question 14 on notice, which was emailed a couple of hours ago, just so it is on the record? It is a typo as I understand it. Sorry, I should not put words in your mouth. If we quickly deal with that before we close that would be much appreciated. Thank you.

Mr HEALY: I thank the member for that. It was a typo I understand. Regarding the components of the answer, it was \$21.4 million as opposed to the \$1.4 million that was in there. It was a typo.

Mr BENNETT: Perfect. Thank you for that clarification.

CHAIR: With that, I would like to thank you. We have now reached the end of the time allocated to examine the proposed expenditure for the sports portfolio area. Thank you, Minister, Director-General, officials and departmental officers for your attendance. I will give you an opportunity to make a closing statement, Minister.

Mr HEALY: Thanks very much, Chair. I want to thank the committee for their contribution and Ms Pretty and those from the secretariat for their contribution as well as everybody sitting both with me and behind me. We would not be able to do the great work we do without the support of everybody.

The tourism and sport portfolios are significant portfolios and they are so vitally important. I am very pleased and proud to be serving in this role. I want to thank, as I said, everyone behind me. We will continue to work hard and make sure we get the right exposure and continue to ensure that we provide for Queenslanders. Thanks very much. Have a good night. I think the Olympics are on at 8.30 pm.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That concludes the hearing of the estimates for the Community Support and Services Committee for 2024. I would like to thank my fellow committee members and the visiting members who participated in the hearing today. Thank you also to Hansard and the parliamentary broadcast staff together with all the other parliamentary staff who assisted here today. I declare the hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 8.01 pm.