

TUESDAY, 23 JULY 2013

ESTIMATES—EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE—EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Estimates Committee Members

Mrs RN Menkens (Chair)
Mr SA Bennett
Mr MA Boothman
Mr RG Hopper
Mr MR Latter
Mrs DC Scott
Mr NA Symes

Members in Attendance

Ms A Palasczucuk
Mr T Mulherin
Ms J Trad

In Attendance

Hon. J-PH Langbroek, Minister for Education, Training and Employment
Mrs F Crawford, Chief of Staff

Department of Education, Training and Employment

Dr J Watterston, Director-General
Mr J Hunt, Deputy Director-General (Acting), Corporate Services
Mr D Ellem, Deputy Director-General, Skills Reform, Training and Employment

TAFE Queensland

Ms J Schmidt, Chief Executive Officer

Committee met at 9.00 am

 **CHAIR:** Good morning. Before we start, I ask members of the media who are recording these proceedings to adhere to the committee's endorsed media guidelines. Committee staff have copies of the guidelines available for you if you require one. I also ask that all mobile phones be switched off or set to silent. Today's hearing is being webcast live, with archived video footage available on the committee's webpage immediately after the hearing. The transcript of today's proceedings will be available from Hansard's webpage approximately two hours after each ministerial session ends.

I now declare open this estimates hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee. I am Rosemary Menkens, the member for Burdekin and chair of the committee. The other committee members here today are Mrs Desley Scott MP, the deputy chair and member for Woodridge; Mr Steve Bennett MP, the member for Burnett; Mr Mark Boothman MP, the member for Albert; Mr Ray Hopper MP, the member for Condamine, who will be here shortly; Mr Michael Latter MP, the member for Waterford; and Mr Neil Symes MP, the member for Lytton. The committee has resolved

that non-committee members may be given leave to attend and ask questions during the hearing. The members for Inala, Mackay and South Brisbane will be joining us during the rest of today's proceedings.

This morning the committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2013 for the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. This afternoon, the committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolio for the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Today's proceedings will be suspended for the following breaks: from 10.30 am to 11 am, from 12.30 pm to 1 pm, from 3 pm to 3.30 pm and 5.30 pm to 6 pm.

We will now examine the budget estimates for the Education, Training and Employment portfolio. On behalf of the committee, I particularly welcome the minister, Minister Langbroek, Director-General Dr Jim Watterston, the departmental officers and members of the public to the hearing this morning. I also welcome Mr Neil McDonald, the Acting Director of the Queensland Studies Authority who, under schedule 7 of the standing orders, may along with the director-general be asked questions directly by the committee. I remind all those participating in the hearings today that these proceedings are proceedings of parliament and that the public cannot participate in the proceedings. In this regard, I remind members of the public that under the standing orders the public may be admitted to or excluded from the hearing at the discretion of the chair. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask all departmental officers to identify themselves before answering a question.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Training and Employment 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 in respect of your portfolio. I remind you that there is a time limit of three minutes for such a statement.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I welcome all committee members and staff on behalf of my department, my senior departmental staff and, of course, my own staff. It is a pleasure to be here for the estimates hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee. Before we begin, on behalf of Her Majesty's government I congratulate Queen Elizabeth II on the birth of her great grandson, the son of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

Let us not beat around the bush: education is a hot topic. We sit here today on the precipice of a federal election in which education will be a crucial issue. In Queensland under the Newman government we have a relentless focus on high standards. Every one of our policies is designed to instil high standards and achieve better student outcomes. The centrepiece of this policy platform is the \$537 million commitment Great Teachers = Great Results. Through this policy, we set high standards for our teachers by investing in and improving teacher quality. Through this policy, we set high standards for our school leaders by giving them more autonomy and cutting red tape. While we make might make them less accountable to Mary Street for every little thing they do, we make them more accountable to their parents and local communities. Through this policy we set high standards for our students by expecting and enforcing the highest standards of behaviour. This is done so we can make even bigger gains from other improvements to the content of the curriculum and the way it is delivered. Ours is a considered policy narrative. It is being supported by a focus from central office on the things that are important in the classroom. Everything—I repeat, everything—we do is about improving student outcomes and every ounce of our energy should be directed towards that end.

Compare this with alternatives at a federal and state level. I said to the Queensland Teachers Union last year and I repeated my words at its conference this year: it is my belief that education is not partisan and to make it so would betray those we seek to educate because our energies should be devoted to them and their futures, not headlines or political point scoring. We have a Prime Minister who would sooner use our schoolchildren for his own political advancement than develop considered and effective policies to improve their outcomes. Unfortunately, given the antics of the Leader of the Opposition and her mates over the past few months, particularly on the weekend and today, the Labor Party in Queensland is cut from the same cloth. It is time the Labor Party reassesses the way they debate education policy in Australia. I hope this committee spends its time today focused, like the Newman government is, on improved student outcomes rather than political sound bites and faux indignation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The government will begin the questioning and I will ask the first question. I refer to page 2 of the SDS regarding supporting skilled and committed staff. Will the minister please outline how the government is going to identify Queensland's high-performing teachers?

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Madam Chair, for the question. On 8 April, the Premier and I announced Great Teachers = Great Results, a direct action plan for Queensland schools. We know from international research that student outcomes are closely linked to the quality of the instruction that they receive in the classroom and, as such, our teachers are the most important resource that we have to give young Queenslanders the best possible start in life. Great Teachers = Great Results focuses on the next wave of educational reforms in two critical areas: professional excellence in teaching, elevating teaching standards across-the-board, rewarding high performance and positioning the highest paid teachers where they are needed most; and boosting school autonomy, empowering and enabling school leaders and teachers to drive outcomes for students, including stronger discipline. A range of rewards and incentives will be introduced through the plan, including strengthening requirements for experienced senior teacher positions, providing an accelerated pathway for high-performing teachers to the experienced senior teacher classification, creating 300 new master teacher positions in targeted schools where their skills and knowledge are needed most and establishing a bonus pool to reward the highest performing teachers and school leaders. Under our plan, principals and school communities will have a greater say in the way their schools are run, including recognising teachers who are excelling. Principals and school communities will also help determine the assessment criteria for rewarding those great teachers and the process will be moderated to ensure fairness and equity.

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

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, in line with your comments about teacher quality referred to on page 3 of the SDS, can you advise of measures in place to upskill teachers through professional development?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. The Department of Education, Training and Employment is committed to ensuring that teachers continue to receive professional development opportunities to enable them to effectively carry out their duties—that is, the duties of their chosen role. In fulfilling this commitment, the department targets delivery of professional development and training activities for teachers during pupil-free days or at other times outside school hours where flexible school based arrangements have been agreed.

Under the Great Teachers = Great Results initiative, the Queensland government is also committed to raising the professional standards of the state's teaching workforce. We will support new teachers entering the profession by pairing them with experienced mentors. Mentors will be supported through release time from the classroom and ongoing networking and professional development to support beginning teachers. We will also support high-performing teachers and school leaders to undertake the necessary study to enhance their performance and be eligible for more senior positions.

From 2015, up to 200 scholarships will be offered each year to high-performing teachers as demonstrated in their annual performance review to undertake a master's degree in a relevant education field negotiated with their employer. From 2015, scholarships will be offered to principals and deputy principals to undertake a graduate certificate in a relevant field negotiated with their employer.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, given the commitment to high-performing teachers that we have already discussed this morning and as part of the Great Teachers = Great Results initiative referred to on page 3 of the SDS, can you explain how the government will continue to reward those teachers and retain them in Queensland's state education system?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is certainly one that has received a lot of interest as I have travelled the state having announced Great Teachers = Great Results. It is important to acknowledge that quality teachers deserve to be rewarded, not only in salary but also through professional recognition and career progression. Providing a satisfying professional career path will encourage high-performing teachers to stay in the classroom for longer, rather than progressing into other educational and administrative roles or other professions.

To keep high-performing teachers in the classroom for longer and encourage teachers to focus on continuous improvement, the Queensland government will introduce a range of rewards and incentives. From 2015, the application process and criteria for moving from the senior teacher to

experienced senior teacher classification will be strengthened. Teachers may access accelerated progression to the experienced senior teacher classification if they have at least five years teaching experience, hold a Master of Education degree or higher and demonstrate high performance in their annual performance reviews. Maintenance of a teacher's accelerated classification will be subject to continued demonstration of high performance in their annual performance reviews. Without acceleration, a teacher with five years experience would normally take eight years to reach the experienced senior teacher classification.

From 2015, 300 fixed term master teacher positions will be created in schools where high-performing teachers are needed the most. Experienced senior teachers with a Master of Education degree who demonstrate high performance in their annual performance review will be eligible to apply for those positions. Specific criteria for each position will vary depending on the needs of the school in which they are situated. Master teachers will supplement a school's normal staffing profile and may be used for targeted student support, coaching and planning, and implementation of relevant initiatives. A key responsibility of master teachers will be to mentor beginning teachers to support their transition into the profession.

For the duration of their three-year contract, master teachers will receive a salary comparable to a head of curriculum. Maintenance of this master teacher position for the full three years of the contract and subsequent extension of the contract will be dependent on a continued demonstration of high performance in the annual performance review process. From 2015, principals will access funds from a regionally managed bonus pool to reward teachers and leaders in their schools who demonstrate high performance in their annual performance review.

Mr SYMES: Minister, in regard to page 3 of the SDS where the government's Great Teachers = Great Results initiative is referenced, can you please outline what support this initiative will provide Queensland's newest teachers?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Teaching, of course, is a unique profession and it sees graduates take full responsibility for student learning from day one, often without ready access to direct mentoring. The Queensland government recognises that beginning teachers and their students can benefit enormously from engaging with a senior colleague in a structured way and on a regular basis. As I have travelled the state, I have done a number of principal forums in about 25 different electorates. I have met with school principals and teachers as I travelled the state. It is very obvious that in many professions the mentoring of inexperienced graduates is something that has happened traditionally and needs to be done more in education. Of course, it is something that the government is absolutely focused on. That is why we have made that an intrinsic part of the policy. We want to ensure that we do have support for beginning teachers, many of whom have to go to some of the most difficult areas to begin their profession.

Recently the director-general and I travelled to Doomadgee and Mornington Island and saw the challenges that some of our least experienced teachers face because of the difficulty we have attracting teachers to those sorts of places. There is no doubt that along with the special support that we might give them to prepare to work in those very challenging environments—and I was speaking to someone the other day whose daughter is on Mornington Island and absolutely loving it, notwithstanding the challenges of isolation and the challenges of being in a completely different environment to the metropolitan area—the mentoring and support that those teachers receive from their principal and more experienced teachers will benefit them as they go through the challenges, not just in these far-flung areas but elsewhere. In any profession people need support from people who can pass on their experience. It is very different from learning about things in theory and doing a few weeks prac in a slightly artificial atmosphere where there is another teacher in the classroom. Of course, we cannot have another teacher in the classroom all the time with beginning teachers, but it is so important to make sure that our classrooms are not silos.

There has been traditionally and over time—and this has happened from the time my father was a teacher—a fear of inspectors coming to give you a rating. It is important, whether it is in politics, teaching or any other profession, that we have professional development in a collegiate way. We have to make sure it is not about inspecting someone and finding fault with what they are doing but trying to help them and work through the process or being a graduate and not being overwhelmed by the various things they have to deal with, whether it is discipline matters or curriculum issues due to the major changes over the last few years with the Australian curriculum. As well as that there are the geographical challenges of being a graduate in a new place.

That is why we have said that we want to make sure we have strong support for our newest teachers. We are making sure that we look at the universities and the courses that they provide. We are working with the universities. We announced our response to the findings of Geoff Masters's original study which looked at how our teachers are prepared. We are making sure that we do not just come down hard on the universities in a simplistic way and say that there is some sort of problem with their course but we are working collaboratively with the nine universities providing teacher education in Queensland to make sure that whether it is about providing practicum—which is the practical experience our trainee teachers have in schools—or making sure our students are prepared by our schools before they go into university to train as teachers, that they are prepared when they come out of university. I want to make sure that we do not have a demonising of any sector or any part of the education community. I know that we are all committed to getting the best outcomes for our students and that the single most important thing that will make a difference to those students is the person who is in front of them.

The government is absolutely committed to making sure that we work across the spectrum from schools in preparing potential student teachers to universities preparing our teachers for the classroom to the schools when those new teachers come out of university and they need that support. We will make sure those new teachers are mentored by experienced, high-performing teachers through the initial years of their teaching career. High-performing teachers will receive accredited mentoring training to coach and guide the practice of beginning teachers. It is just as we said with principals who also need to be upskilled in management practice. They are leaders in their community and we do not want them to be afraid of the responsibility or, as other people have suggested to me, that we are asking them to do too much. We believe that they are leaders in the community just as the director-general leads the department. He of course has a significant leadership role.

Similarly, we believe that principals with appropriate training should be able to manage many of those issues. We want to make sure we guide them in that regard. We will also have mentors being supported through release time from the classroom and ongoing networking and professional development to support beginning teachers.

CHAIR: I call the member for Waterford.

Mr LATTER: The minister well knows that the seat of Waterford in the city of Logan is a diverse community with diverse needs. To that end, I refer to page 3 of the SDS and Great Teachers = Great Results. Minister, can you please explain how struggling schools will benefit from this initiative?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. All members of the committee know that we have had significant issues throughout the state. We have had climatic challenges. Earlier in the year we had issues around relationships between students in Logan. It actually did not happen in our schools but it happened in the community. I know that Mayor Pam Parker convened a summit on this. The honourable member was there as were other members from both sides of the House.

I had had a principal forum in Logan some time before that and I have spoken to a number of principals at those schools and have visited those schools, both in the member's electorate and other electorates as well. I have been to training awards and seen the efforts of some of our finest students from the south-east region being acknowledged. Some of the students from Woodridge High have won significant training awards. Some of them are refugees. It is certainly interesting to see how those schools and their parents and teachers are very proud of where they are from—and so they should be—and proud of their achievements.

They have been able to do that with significant support over the last few years through a national partnership for low socioeconomic schools. That is something that the Queensland government has been very appreciative of. We know that this involves a significant number of schools throughout the state. It is not just limited to the Logan area. Wherever I travel for principal forums—and I was in Cairns last week—I hear from principals at neighbouring schools to those designated as low socioeconomic national partnership schools that do not receive any of that funding. The dilemma that ministers and government's often face is that you have to draw the line somewhere. There are a number of areas around Ipswich and Logan, for example, like this. Also in areas like mine on the Gold Coast and in the corridor between Brisbane and the coast there are significant challenges for many parents, students, teachers and principals.

What we want to make sure with Great Teachers = Great Results is that we give all young Queenslanders the best possible start in life through education. The key aspect of the plan is providing those students who are disadvantaged by disability, locality or culture with the best teaching

resources possible. By deploying high-performing teachers to where they are needed most—with a focus on students with a disability, Indigenous students, those from low socioeconomic backgrounds and language backgrounds other than English—we will provide such students with every opportunity to be empowered and exceed their potential.

To support this aspect of the plan, 300 new master teacher positions will be created to ensure quality teachers are working where they are needed most. Master teacher positions will be in addition to a school's normal staffing profile and may be used for targeted student support, coaching, planning and implementation of relevant initiatives. Each primary school with a master teacher will receive an early years resource package of up to \$75,000 over three years to be used to respond to the specific needs of the school and boost literacy and numeracy outcomes.

I can say to the honourable member that whether it is in his electorate or in the electorates of Lytton, Logan, Logan, Albert, Woodridge, Inala, Broadwater, Cairns or in areas through Callide there are so many areas where it is important to make sure that we spread these resources and not just based on results. I think a significant incorrect interpretation of the government's policy has been that these master teachers will only go to schools where they are achieving the best results. We have said very clearly that we want to make sure that master teachers are recognised for being able to assist in areas where there are great challenges—literacy and numeracy, behaviour. Should teachers be recognised by being awarded scholarships and then becoming master teachers they may go to areas like Bundaberg and Burnett. I think it is something that we need to acknowledge right across the state.

There is a perception in certain areas about wealth and yet not one single member of parliament would attest to the fact that everyone in their electorate fits a particular profile. It does not matter whether you come from inner-city Brisbane or the most far-flung areas of our state, there are challenges. We know the challenges that our teachers and parents face in areas like the Torres Strait and Far North Queensland. That is an important acknowledgement the government has made in its policy. We are going to make sure that we help those who do need the most help.

CHAIR: We will now go to the opposition members for questions. I call the member for Inala, the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Good morning, Minister, and good morning to your departmental representatives. My first question is to the director-general. Director-General, I refer to page 2 of the SDS in relation to creating brighter futures for our students. My question is in relation to the travelling show school. An RTI released document of 19 September 2012 states quite clearly that the minister approved for the school to close at the end 2012. Director-General, did the department close the travelling show school at the end of 2012?

Dr Watterston: Can I thank you for the question. As you would appreciate, I took up the role as director-general in April 2013. However, I am aware of this issue and certainly from a Victorian point of view had some involvement at the time.

It was determined that the travelling show school would cease operations at the end of 2012. As you would be aware, the students that constitute the profile of that school came from three different states. It was determined from our point of view—that is, the department's point of view—that the way the school was operating probably was not best serving the needs of those students and probably was not providing an education that would enable them to have brighter futures as you determined in your question.

We were looking to make sure that those students had access to the latest curriculum and classroom learning materials and access to a wider range of curriculum offerings and also special needs assistance across the school. As part of the transition the department released \$210,000 in additional funds from the school's former parents and citizens association to enable the Showmens Guild to employ staff and support students who transitioned to distance education.

It is my understanding at the moment that the students are certainly still part of a travelling school but work through distance education in Queensland. Technically the school in the form that it existed at the time has closed, but the school still exists and education is being provided by the Queensland distance education system.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Minister, I refer to the gazettal notice on 9 November 2012—proposed closure of a state school. Minister, did you close the travelling school? I seek leave to table that gazettal notice.

Mr LANGBROEK: Does she have to seek leave to table?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, I do.

CHAIR: You do have to seek leave to table the document. I would appreciate it if you would pass it through.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I did. I seek leave to table the document. You ask whether leave is granted.

CHAIR: No, we would like to see the document before leave is granted.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a gazettal notice; it is a public document.

CHAIR: Leave is granted for the tabling.

Mr LANGBROEK: Sorry, Leader of the Opposition, what was your question again?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Did you close the travelling show school?

Mr LANGBROEK: This is something we prosecuted at last year's estimates for some time. I think it is interesting that we are going to go back there again about a decision that we made last year.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No. Just a simple yes or no is fine, Minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you for your guidance. I will answer it as I see fit. Importantly, your question originally to the director-general was about whether we think that these students are going to have a brighter future, and we believe that they will through the Brisbane School of Distance Education. So they are still getting an education. We are confident that it is going to be a better one than the one they were receiving, because their NAPLAN results were very disappointing and, importantly, the majority of students were not from Queensland. So all the processes were followed and, importantly, they do have a brighter future. If you would like to move on to this year's estimates, then I am happy to do that.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sure. Minister, I was just wondering why the Premier was stating that no school had closed when, by the gazettal notice, you had actually closed the travelling school show.

Mr LANGBROEK: I think the honourable member had a chance to ask the Premier that last week.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I refer to page 28 of the SDS in relation to cash flows from investing activities, and one of the inflows is the sales of property, plant and equipment. I note that the adjusted budget is \$109 million and the estimated actual is \$70 million for 2012-13. Minister, I refer to an answer to question on notice No. 5 where the department has achieved net asset sales totalling \$38 million. Minister, where is the remaining \$32 million?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Let's go back to the reason why we are having to find significant revenue in my department, and that is we were left with a significant maintenance backlog by the former Labor government, of which of course the honourable member was a member and a minister—a near \$300 million maintenance backlog, with some schools needing up to \$4 million in terms of their backlog. So it was a real hospital pass. We undertook to fix it because honourable members of the committee will be aware as they travelled around their schools for a number of years that those principals would often tell them that they were given \$20,000 or \$30,000 to fix problems that were adding up to significant amounts, including, as I said, up to \$4 million.

So we said we had to try to fix the broken downpipes and we had to fix the peeling paint and we had to fix the cracked walls and the lino floors. Part of that meant that we had to find revenue, which the previous government had done as well over the preceding number of years by selling surplus land to the quantum of about \$56 million. That is something that we also agreed to do; hence, as the honourable member referred to, the statistics that she is referring to in the SDS. Unfortunately, we also had a very inefficient system of having to use QBuild for maintenance. We then had to go through a process of identifying surplus land and making sure that we could dispose of that after we made sure there were no native title impediments or other impediments that ensure that you cannot just sell off land without having appropriate planning.

So throughout the year, as you will see in the statistics you refer to, there has been \$38 million of sales, but it is an ongoing process. I think it is important to point out to the committee that in raising money from selling off land and things like that we have to work with other departments to do so. We are doing that, just as the previous government did, and that means that some processes—for example, when we are doing rolling disposals—take longer than others. But it is a natural process of

government—one that had been done, as I said, by the previous government and one that we are continuing to do. In answer to the question on notice that you referred to, we have released a number of details about those amounts of money—

Ms PALASZCZUK: It was very nice to receive the property address numbers rather than the lot numbers.

Mr LANGBROEK: I think you will see, honourable member, that the answer to estimates question on notice No. 5 from the committee clearly outlines the total specification of the \$38 million there with address details. The point is, in answer to the question again, we agreed through part of a very concentrated process with Treasury that we would be raising a significant amount of money. We have done that. We will continue to do it. We will make sure though that we do it in a way that means we do not have problems via not having done the processes properly by dealing with the government land unit in State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. But it is an ongoing process that the previous government did as well to the quantum of \$56 million.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I might ask the director-general if he could answer the question. Director-General, my question is very clear. The estimated actual is \$70 million. The answer to the question on notice only provides details of assets sales totalling \$38 million. Where is the remaining \$32 million? What are those properties that are missing from the answer?

Dr Watterston: I thank you for the question. Can I just reiterate the answer that has already been provided that \$38 million of sales have occurred. So when you ask the question to me, 'Where is the other \$32 million of sales?', we have not sold the properties at this point.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Will you provide a list to the committee?

Dr Watterston: There is certainly an opportunity for us to consider other surplus land. But at this point we are still considering what is possible and looking at our options. So I am certainly happy to—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Director-General, in your budget papers it is \$70 million.

Mr LANGBROEK: Sorry to interrupt, but I am trying to give you the answer.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am not asking you, Minister; I am asking the director-general. I am allowed to ask the director-general.

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, I know. But the lot numbers were in the answer to the previous question on notice that you asked. This is the specific address details. The lot numbers to which you referred—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Forget the lot numbers. I am asking for the remaining \$32 million.

Mr LANGBROEK: Well they are the details for which you have asked. They have already been provided to you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am asking the director-general to provide the answer, please, not you.

Dr Watterston: It is my understanding that the details have been provided and we are certainly happy to supply them again.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is the remaining properties that make up the total amount of \$70 million? I need to be very clear here.

Dr Watterston: I will hand over to our Deputy Director-General of Corporate Services who will give you the complete answer.

Mr Hunt: We would not release the details of the other parcels at this stage. There is a whole process that we need to go through obviously of due diligence—the assessment of native title, koala habitat and other requirements that we need to satisfy ourselves with before we take a property to market. You would understand with a large portfolio that we would need to make those due diligence assessments before we took any property to market, and we are working through that process in order to achieve the figures that you are talking about. This is a process where we work with other parts of government, as the minister and the director-general have mentioned. We will continue to do that to make sure that we do the right thing in the assessment of those properties before we take them to market. You would understand that there are a whole range of issues that go with the assessment of those properties. There are boundary issues sometimes. There are some repatriation issues sometimes with those parcels of land. Those are the range of considerations that we need to make to make sure that the department is acting appropriately.

Ms PALASZCZUK: But surely the department would have some understanding of where these properties are located to make up the \$32 million shortfall that is in the budget papers.

Mr Hunt: The department has over 2,500, I think it is, parcels of land—some 3,600 lots across the state. This is a huge asset portfolio. We routinely, as with this government and as with the former government, go through an assessment process annually to ensure that we do the utilisation, the viability, the asset purpose assessments on the parcels of land that we have. We need to do that to make sure that we are managing this significant asset portfolio in an appropriate way. As the minister has pointed out, this was part of the budget to ensure that we could also address other parts of our asset management portfolio, that being the maintenance component of the budget. That is a significant undertaking in and of itself, and we are working with schools to ensure that that maintenance portfolio is dealt with appropriately as well.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Can I ask then: are the eight schools that are flagged for possible closure going to be considered as part of the remaining \$32 million of potential asset sales?

Mr Hunt: They are not considered in terms of the budgeted figures at this stage because no determination has been made.

Ms PALASZCZUK: But they could be?

Mr Hunt: This is no different to selling a house and there are a whole range of things that go with a property sale. There are contract conditions that we need to consider. When we take a property to market, purchasers may put on the table a whole range of issues that balance price and conditions. Often purchasers will want to assess the properties for potential rezoning or other purposes. So there are a whole range of things that need to go not only from a due diligence perspective on the department's side of the fence but also on the purchasers' side of the fence to make sure that an appropriate value is established and gained for the department and the government. So those processes will run their natural course and make sure that we get that.

In terms of the schools that have been identified for potential closure, it is only that—potential closure. As you would be aware, there is a significant community consultation process that is underway and no decision has been made about the closure of those sites because we have not received the report from the consultants at this stage.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Director-General, why was the Brisbane School of Distance Education sold?

Dr Watterston: Can I refer that question to the Deputy Director-General of Corporate Services?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sure.

Mr Hunt: Again, the Brisbane School of Distance Education is a site that was of significant value that was part of our asset portfolio. We had relocated the Brisbane School of Distance Education to a more contemporary premises at Coorparoo and purpose built facilities to represent their expanding service to make sure that they had the appropriate facilities for staff and students. That site offers access to ovals adjacent to their site and that then benefits the kids who come in for visits to the Brisbane School of Distance Education. So it was a much better outcome, and that significant investment in the new facility obviously is part of our whole broad asset management portfolio. As with any other large property portfolio owner, the department has to ensure that we are managing our assets not only on the upside in terms of making sure that we are providing contemporary assets and contemporary services and facilities for our staff and students but also when we are retiring assets that are no longer fit for purpose, and that is a normal part of asset management.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Director-General, why are so many properties at Emerald being sold? Hasn't the department in the past been made aware of the fact that sometimes teacher housing would be provided for teachers going to remote locations? I know Emerald is a growing community. Why is the department selling residential land there?

Dr Watterston: Thank you for the question. As you will appreciate, I have been in the position for three months and some of these decisions were made prior to my arrival. So I will beg your indulgence and hand over to the Deputy Director-General of Corporate Services to explain how these decisions came about.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sure.

Mr Hunt: I go back to the issue of broader portfolio management. We look at, and we have been looking at actively, the whole asset portfolio of the department. We are not in the business of land banking for other purposes necessarily. We are focused on the prime services of educational

service delivery. We have held a number of land assets for periods of time in the interests and the potential of developing those assets. Where those assets have not been identified to realise or develop for a whole range of reasons—I would ask the committee to understand that in managing a significant portfolio like this there are always competing priorities. We are addressing the competing priority of making sure that we are fit to serve the growing needs of the student population across the state every year. This year, with significant growth in student population, there have been two new high schools developed and significant investments in upgrades and refurbishments. That is all part of our asset responsibility.

In terms of the land assets in Emerald that you are referring to, we have considered that those are not likely to be developed in the short or medium term and therefore they are an asset that we do not necessarily need to hold. There are other models of housing. The department already leases houses from other government departments as well as leasing private accommodation for the purposes of teacher or staff housing. We think that that model is right in terms of the way in which we have a mixed model of delivery, and we will continue to examine that in terms of the role that we play in supporting staff through housing. Land banking is something that we do not see in that particular locale that we would necessarily need to hold for extended periods of time because the costs of holding that land also affect our financial position. If we were going to develop it in the short or medium term, then clearly that would be a different consideration. But we have a range of models of housing support for staff, and we do not believe that we need those assets in the short or medium term. We can use other models of market provision to support the staff and teacher housing that our staff members require.

CHAIR: That brings to a close the first block of non-government members' questions. Minister, as referenced on page 3 of the SDS, can you explain what is being done to assist students with complex discipline issues?

Mr LANGBROEK: This is another significant issue. Discipline in our schools is one that everyone has a view about. They often have a view about it because they were in schools at some stage—sometimes a long time ago. They certainly have opinions about what happens in our schools, and they have a right to have an opinion. But it is also important that our teachers and principals get the support they need to maintain appropriate standards, that the majority of our students who do not have discipline issues are allowed to get on with their study and their lives, and that those with discipline issues are able to be dealt with in a caring, holistic way. We need to balance the amount of red tape that principals have to go through with some of these discipline measures and caring for these students and making sure they can improve.

Sometimes they face very complex social situations with their families and the complex worlds they live in. These are things that, when you look at it in the cold, hard light of day, are not very obvious but the government is acutely aware of. We want parents to be involved. It is very important to acknowledge that we have students for 13 per cent of the time in schools and that schools are not responsible for everything that happens. They cannot be expected to teach students things that their parents should be teaching them, and that is why it is an unabashed aim of the government to get parents in the community more involved in our schools, whether it comes to discipline or the formal part of education or even social activities.

We are working on a range of strategies for implementation in 2014. I have already mentioned that we want to remove red tape from legislation and departmental policies. There will be community service interventions where students will complete tasks beneficial to the community. There will be discipline improvement plans which require parents to agree to a plan to improve their child's behaviour and greater flexibility around when detentions can be applied. We are going to conduct discipline audits in all Queensland state schools. They are going to be associated with our learning and teaching audits that I know principals and teachers have found very beneficial. We want to expand relationships with special assistance schools to support students who require highly specialised support for their behavioural needs.

When these are fully implemented, Queensland state school principals will have at their disposal some of the most robust disciplinary powers in Australia. They will have access to more diversionary programs to engage students in a preventative measure and the capacity to deal swiftly with students who do not respond to attempts to change their behaviour. One of the important messages I have given to principals as I have travelled around is that we know there are students who think they can push the envelope. Some of our legislative changes will be a surprise to students who have been able to get away with behaviour for which they could not be penalised as quickly as we were anticipating them being able to be penalised by a principal who can say, 'I'm afraid that's not

okay and I'm not limited to a 20-minute detention at lunchtime or 30 minutes after school. Here are the rules. Here is the contract that you signed with your parents about behaviour. Your parents are now involved. This is intolerable and we are going to do X about it.'

We have more legislation covering that sort of behaviour than any other state. We have up to 40 pages of legislation covering these disciplinary matters, and in other states it is a couple of pages of legislation or regulation. We are determined to remove some of that to put the power back in the hands of principals and teachers. Should we give them more powers we do not anticipate there being more suspensions and exclusions simply for the sake of being able to show those numbers. What we would like to see is the power given back to those authorities so that people understand the consequences of their behaviour and modify their behaviour as much as anything because we will be giving them more support in terms of augmenting special assistance schools and those other measures which I have referred to.

For the committee's advice, we currently have human resources of approximately 2,000 teaching FTEs who have the skills to deliver targeted intervention. This allows regions to have the flexibility to provide behaviour and learning support to schools to meet the specific needs of their school community. School based staff are able to access the professional counselling services of the department's Employee Assistance Service. We also provide alternative education programs as needed. A scan in 2012 showed there were more than 90 alternative education programs for both non-state and state students including 15 positive learning centres available for students requiring specialised behaviour support.

There are three key professional development packages available to train state school staff on positively managing behaviour: a Better Behaviour, Better Learning online course; an Essential Skills for Classroom Management package; and Preventing Challenging Behaviour in Prep and the Early Years—another significant matter. It is hard to believe but some of our preppies come to school and they may not be toilet trained. They may have significant behavioural issues that are very difficult for our teachers to deal with. So we have a program called Preventing Challenging Behaviour in Prep and the Early Years. But it has to be a collaborative thing for us to work with parents, and that is something the government is committed to doing.

We have 15 strategies in our action plan that will cut red tape and give greater flexibility to deal with these school disciplinary issues. As I said, we want to give our state school principals disciplinary powers, unlike other states in Australia where sometimes it is regional teams or senior officers who hold these disciplinary powers. I know that some of our state school principals have been a bit frustrated by the appeal levels to which parents and students can go when we believe the state school principal should be the one to make the decision about the appropriateness of action such as suspension and exclusion, as they often are in the non-state sector.

We need a balance between flexibility and accountability. The government is committed to making sure that when we are managing student behaviour we remove these roadblocks. We want to stop diverting the time of principals who tell me that, instead of supplementing teaching and learning of their teachers—in other words, being mentors in those roles—too much of their time is having to be spent dealing with students who need wraparound services to deal with mental health, disability, the fact that children have come to school with no breakfast or lunch, unemployment in families and other issues that affect our teachers and students at the coalface.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, the electorate of Albert has some fantastic education facilities—both state and non-state schools. I refer to page 20 of the SDS. Can the minister outline what benefits there are in this year's budget for non-state schools?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. The committee is well aware of the fact that both state and non-state schools get support from all levels of government, especially state and federal. Whilst the state government provides the bulk of support for state schools, it also provides support for 483 accredited non-state schools. Having visited in the honourable member's electorate St Stephen's and Upper Coomera Secondary College, just a few hundred metres apart, I have seen in both schools passionate P&Cs, parent involvement, community involvement as well a teaching staff and principals who are proud of what their students are achieving.

It is important to acknowledge that as a government we certainly support choice. That is why we have budgeted \$679.5 million for these non-state schools in 2013-14 including recurrent and capital funding. Queensland is acknowledged by that sector as providing significantly more capital funding than a number of other states or territories. Total recurrent funding in 2013-14 is

\$551.53 million, which is an increase of 5.4 per cent from 2012-13, and comprises \$546.28 million in general recurrent grants, \$5.08 million for school transport and \$164,000 to assist the grammar schools with additional costs associated with statutory body status.

Significantly, I can advise the committee that students with a disability are receiving 6.67 per cent of general recurrent funding, which is \$36.43 million in 2013-14. That is an increase of 5.2 per cent from 2012-13. Capital assistance is \$127.97 million in 2013-14. That is an increase of 47.3 per cent from 2012-13. That is a significant increase partly because we have had extra money given to the non-state school sector for Flying Start, which is year 7 going into high school. A total of \$105 million went into the non-state sector for that. I think \$100 million approximately went to the Catholic sector and \$5 million to other independent schools.

The break-up of capital assistance is \$45.98 million to the State Capital Assistance Scheme, which, as I have already mentioned, is acknowledged by them as being far more generous than in other states; \$5.39 million to the External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme; \$57.84 million to the Flying Start Capital Assistance Scheme; and \$18.75 million Building Our Future Schools Fund. Queensland government funding per student is the third highest in Australia. Total Commonwealth funding in 2013-14 was \$1.97 billion. We acknowledge the contribution of the Commonwealth as well. I know those schools are very appreciative. We now have approximately a two-third, one-third split in terms of where our students are going. We have over 500,000 students in the state system and approximately 250,000 in the Catholic and independent sector. There is no doubt that people want choice.

The state is absolutely committed to providing an education where many students will not receive choice otherwise. In the far-flung areas of our state, as I recall, the Catholic schools do not go west beyond Longreach. Of course we have a school in the state system that is eight hours west, in Boulia. The members for Mount Isa and Gregory are very aware of those issues and they have of course made me aware. In the northern parts of the state there is just not the choice, because for independent schools you need a committee to be prepared to set up a school. Whilst they may be not for profit, they certainly cannot run at a loss. That is why the state already provides significant funding. As part of the national debate about whether we have needs based funding, we already have significant funding that we spend on students who are either Indigenous, who have disability, for whom English is a second language, who are in small or remote schools or who are of low socioeconomic status. That is something that I think may have been lost in the national debate about whether we have a system that already acknowledges those special needs. There is always more that can be done, but with a limited budget they are the things that we have to focus on. Support for non-state schools is something that I know will continue from both sides of politics. It is significant. It has been acknowledged by the non-state sector that it is very appreciative of the increase in funding that it has received in this upcoming budget. It is an increase in funding of over six per cent overall in the education budget and over five per cent to the Catholics and the independent sector.

Mr BENNETT: As a government that believes in choice, can the minister please explain what steps have been taken to improve teacher quality in the non-state school sector as referenced on page 3 of the SDS?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I have already referred this morning to the issue about preparation of our teachers and the fact that the person standing in front of a class, and the student, is the most important thing that will make a difference. We all appreciate infrastructure, and no-one begrudges people having good facilities to study in, but there is no doubt that all the studies show that the quality of the teacher is what makes the greatest difference. That should not be taken as any reflection on the quality of the teachers we have in our system. But just as all of us seek to improve our performance in whatever profession or field we are in, we know there is more that can be done to improve teacher quality. That is why in October last year we endorsed *Fresh start: improving the preparation and quality of teachers for contemporary Queensland school settings*.

The strategy details a suite of interconnected strategic initiatives focused on attracting the highest quality applicants into the teaching profession, ensuring they have the essential skills, knowledge and experience required for the diverse real world of contemporary Queensland schools, and supporting their transition from pre service to beginning as a teacher. Some years ago we had a teacher education task force, and of course there has been a Productivity Commission report on the school work force. The initiatives include professional experience partnership agreements to formalise professional experience partnerships between school sectors and higher education institutions—in

other words, making sure that schools work with our universities so that the teachers we receive from our universities have all the abilities and skills to work in our system, whether it is the state or the non-state system.

We have made sure that Independent Schools Queensland, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and the Queensland College of Teachers were consulted in the development of the strategy. We have commenced discussions with Queensland's deans of education in those universities to negotiate implementation of the strategy. Independent Schools Queensland and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission played a fundamental role in representing those sectors. We have proposed to increase funding to the non-government school sectors by \$98 million as part of Great Teachers = Great Results, commencing in 2015, as part of their proportion of the \$537 million.

Importantly, they are experts on their own schools. They can tailor their reforms to their own individual needs and circumstances. Many of the issues raised in Great Teachers = Great Results are things that the non-state schools have already been doing. We have said unabashedly that we want to work with them to hear their ideas about improving teacher quality in state schools as well as non-state schools, even though we have professional development, mentoring and those sorts of things in state schools.

They will have to demonstrate that they have systems in place to identify these teachers and provide feedback to all teachers on performance, but we have made it very clear that them that we do not want it to be a red-tape burden—something they are always concerned about, as they have expressed in the current federal negotiations as well.

CHAIR: That brings this block of government questions to a close. I now call on the member for Condamine.

Mr HOPPER: Good morning, Minister. I apologise for being late this morning. I refer again to page 1, 'Creating a Brighter Future', to the income statement on page 28 and to page 26. I ask once again about school closures. Minister, do you have an estimate of how much revenue will be raised from the sell-off of state schools?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This question has already been asked this morning. The answer is no. We have not made a decision about schools; therefore, value once they are potentially closed is not something we have factored in. I was asked earlier by the Leader of the Opposition and this was clarified for her and the committee's benefit. On page 28, to which the honourable member has referred, there is no factoring in of the potential value of any of those schools where we are still having discussions about potential closures.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you very much. Minister, as you are aware, Wyreema and Charlton state schools are in my electorate. Toowoomba South is on the edge of my electorate. I have invited you to attend both of these schools and meet with the communities. I realise that you have a very busy program and it is very hard to do; however, we have seen this government put in place a consultancy program to meet with the communities. If this consultancy program fails and a decision is made to sell those schools, what process will those schools go through and when do you think they would be closed, if that did happen to fail?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course, this is something we have been discussing now for a couple of months, since we announced the process. For the honourable member's information we need to go back to the start and explain why we have ended up where we are. When we came to government just over a year ago there was no process in place for looking at school viability. Neither of the two previous ministers was prepared to do that, so it had been three years since we had looked at the process of viability.

First of all, we are waiting for the consultants' report. Once consultation closes in a few days they will get that to us and we will make a decision by early August, but no decision has been made beforehand. In fact, this government has shown that it is prepared to listen to calm and mature conversations. We have not factored in any value of the land, as I have already said. Importantly, we need to have a process where we look at our schools—1,240 of them across the state. This year we have looked at those. I received advice from my department that we need to have a viability program which is based on enrolment, subject choice and how many people who go to those schools are from within the catchment area and how many are from other areas. They are all the things that we have had to look at because there was no process.

But the process will continue whether I am the minister or whether someone else becomes the minister subsequently, because it is a responsible thing to do when you have an \$18 billion portfolio out of which you might look at a fraction of a per cent. It is an indictment on the former government and those two former ministers—Cameron Dick and Geoff Wilson—that they did not have the intestinal fortitude to put that process in place.

In answer to your question, nothing has been decided but those communities have been made very well aware that we are continuing the process. We showed on the weekend what can happen when we have a calm and mature conversation. When it comes to maintaining our assets, we need to focus our resources on achieving outcomes in the classroom. If that means not necessarily maintaining things that we have been maintaining at the cost of giving the best services to our students and our teachers, then that is something we have to do.

That is the process. It closes in a few weeks. As part of the consultation we have had local members there, the consultants were there taking on board all of that information, and I have attended a number of those meetings as well.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you, Minister. With the same references, what figure will be spent on consultancy programs?

Mr LANGBROEK: That is an amount I am happy to provide at some stage. I cannot give you that amount right now. It is very important to have those consultancies there to address the questions when they are asked. I can certainly give you a global figure for consultancies, but it is very important to make sure that, in the areas we are considering, we give people the opportunity to provide feedback about their concerns. No individual members of parliament—the honourable member of course is one—would reasonably be expected to take down every concern of every parent, student, teacher or principal. That is why we have engaged, as the previous government did, consultants—to ensure a process that does not always take place in a public meeting type atmosphere. At the meetings I have attended I have been happy to answer questions but have sometimes referred people with questions to the consultants for subsequent detail, so that we can answer all of the concerns that parents will have, whether they are about subjects, transport, uniforms, the culture of the school or whatever.

I can provide the detail that in 2012-13 some \$1.749 million was spent by the Department of Education, Training and Employment on consultancies. As I have said, that is where an independent view or opinion is required. And it is important to acknowledge, as I already have, that we are taking note of that independent view or opinion—we certainly did that over the last week—as opposed to making a decision and just saying, 'That's it. We are not for turning.' We have no qualms about saying, 'Well, we want to make sure we make a decision that, whilst it might relate to a policy or an idea that was handed to us from someone else, results from consideration and from listening to the community.' When it comes to the school viability assessment, the proposed school closure consultation from JTA Australia, I can advise that for four months the amount of the consultancy is \$56,165.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you, Minister. With the same references, as you are probably aware, the area of Highfields, just north of Toowoomba, is a very strong growth area. Wyreema will be in the same situation in five or 10 years time. We are seeing schools being built at Highfields. Wouldn't it be a shame to close and sell the Wyreema State School and then have to build a new school in five or 10 years time, whoever is in government?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. That goes to the heart of what we have released today—that is, the Schools Planning Commission. That is looking at the detail of where students currently live and where they are enrolled. It is something that has never been done before. It is looking at 10 and 20 years from now. We want to plan. We want to make sure we work with local authorities. We announced this as part of our election platform in the lead-up to the election last year, saying that we should bring all sectors together and should look at all the data. I can understand how people in particular areas will say that they were promised a school by a developer, for example. The former government did not have a schools planning process. It did it in an ad hoc way. That is exemplified by the fact that, out of 1,240 schools, we are building two this year. The Catholic system opened two and the independents opened none. That is obviously not planning for the future.

I acknowledge your concerns about Wyreema. We have already mentioned Highfields, where there is planning going on for a school. Instead of planning in every area about which people say, 'I know we are going to have growth here over the next few years and therefore you should be either

buying land or making sure you plan for a school,' we need to approach it more scientifically, whether it is Gladstone or Calliope. Via the Schools Planning Commission we will also then go back to local councils—in the honourable member's area that is Toowoomba Regional Council—to talk to them about where they, in their town plan, are looking to have developments so that we can then work with them and Treasury, with their statistics through OESR, to plan for where we are going to build schools and have the appropriate planning in place.

The maps that have come out today—they are Townsville, Caloundra South and Brisbane north metropolitan—are just a precursor to the release of more statistics and more maps for other areas. I can assure the honourable member that Toowoomba is one of those areas that we will be looking at over the next few months. Work can subsequently be done to plan appropriately. That is why there needs to be a balance between what we currently have, which I have already explained—saying that we have the Schools Planning Commission—and infrastructure demand maps done more scientifically than has been the case in the past.

Mr HOPPER: I have a final question with the same reference. Minister, have you told any staff member in your department that a certain school will close?

Mr LANGBROEK: No.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the director-general. Will the director-general confirm that departmental staff have contacted the Toowoomba South P&C president asking her to cease her Facebook and Twitter campaign to save the school from closure?

Dr Watterston: Thank you for the question. No, I cannot confirm that. Certainly to the best of my knowledge that is not an instruction that has come through my office.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Director-General, I am happy to provide you with further information. Would you undertake to investigate that matter?

Dr Watterston: Absolutely.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have spoken to the P&C president. She is appalled. She has felt intimidated. She has felt bullied. I do not think it is appropriate behaviour. So I am happy for you to investigate if you undertake to do that. I do not want to name the person here, but I am happy to provide you with details.

Dr Watterston: I am certainly open to investigating and to finding out whether there is a factual basis.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you. Minister, I note that today you are releasing the Schools Planning Commission, talking about the future growth of the state and where schools are needed and planned for in the future. Minister, initially you flagged 55 school sites for closure—

Mr LANGBROEK: No, I am sorry. I cannot accept that. That is not—

Ms PALASZCZUK: There was a list of 55. There was a list.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to go into the detail. Because there was no process of identifying potential schools, the department prepared a list based on criteria that they came up with which I rejected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: And then you nominated these eight schools for potential closure. Minister, if you have now released the planning commission report, how did you plan and how did the department advise you to come to the conclusion that these eight schools should be on your chopping block list?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. The important issue here is to look at the viability that the honourable member asked me about. As I have already mentioned in answer to the member for Condamine, there was no process in place to look at school viability. So whilst we established the Schools Planning Commission—

Ms PALASZCZUK: You picked eight schools before you released the Schools Planning Commission report.

Mr LANGBROEK: Because the previous government, of which the honourable member was a member, had no process in place to look at viability and had not done so since 2010. If I take the honourable member's suggestion, we should wait another year and not look at any school's viability because the previous government did not have the gumption to do it and nor should we. We, of

course, do have the intestinal fortitude to make sure that we have a proper process to look at viability because, as I have already mentioned to the committee, it is an \$18 billion portfolio with an \$11 billion turnover every year.

When the Schools Planning Commission was established with a view to looking at the next 20 years, we also had to have a process in place in 2012-13 to look at the short-term viability of schools before we got the Schools Planning Commission data. That is why I look forward to being able to provide information to the member for Condamine, who just asked me about potential issues in Wyreema. Under the previous regime there would have been no planning at all except, potentially, for the previous government to have bought a block of land somewhere in that area. Then if they were to close a school—and remember that they did close 139 schools in the last 20 years—they would say, 'We are closing that, but we are buying a block of land and we will build you another one if that housing estate goes ahead.'

I will come back to the honourable member's question about the 55 schools that were mentioned. It is true that, because there was no viability assessment process in place, the department came to me with a list of 55 schools based on their criteria. I ruled that out and said that we need to have a process. The process would be that we would look at a five-year average of student numbers, the trend of the average numbers, the percentage of resident student numbers attending—students coming from the catchment—the distance from the nearest school and the capacity of surrounding schools. We looked at all of those issues, and that is how we came up with the eight schools using the viability criteria. We do not resile from saying that we are going to have a conversation with those schools, but, most importantly, it must be a calm and mature conversation which is not based on histrionics or rallies at which we have got people, often combining with unions, holding up signs—

Ms PALASZCZUK: You never attended a school rally when you were the Leader of the Opposition, did you, Minister? I recall you being at my schools.

Mr LANGBROEK: I also remember that the honourable member could not even go to a school in her own electorate which was having a meeting about a potential school closure.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I did attend Inala West, Minister, so be very careful.

Mr LANGBROEK: I think we have discussed that in parliament.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Be very careful.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to stand corrected, but as I understand it—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sorry, I attended Richlands. I correct the record.

Mr LANGBROEK: I will clarify that in parliament the next time we are there. Your question is?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Minister, what is the estimated value of the Fortitude Valley State School site?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Once again, value is not a factor that we discussed in terms of viability. I do not necessarily have valuations—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Minister, I find it incomprehensible that your department does not have an estimated value of the Fortitude Valley State School site.

Mr LANGBROEK: Once again, Madam Chair, we can ask about lots of schools which the union has suggested that—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Your list.

Mr LANGBROEK: You can ask me the question and then I will answer it. Of course we have valuations across all of our properties, because that is part of what we have to do as part of the fact that it is land, and therefore it has a value that comes to us from government. But if the honourable member is asserting that for some reason we are considering the closure aspect because of the value of the land—as has been raised by the Queensland Teachers Union earlier in the year about other valuable sites at Broadbeach State School and East Brisbane State School—it has nothing to do with it. I have already mentioned the five viability issues which we consider. Otherwise, we would be selling the most valuable sites because they have the most value.

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the director-general. Director-General, what is the department's estimated value of the Fortitude Valley State School site?

Dr Watterston: I thank the honourable member for the question. The advice I have been given is that there is a net book value which is very different to the market value. We will have to take it on notice and provide you with the net book value. You will understand that that is commercial-in-confidence, and if we were to put that net book value out there, then it would affect the market value price.

Ms PALASZCZUK: But the department does have a net book value for the Fortitude Valley State School site?

Dr Watterston: We certainly do.

CHAIR: Minister, you are the only person who can take a question on notice.

Mr LANGBROEK: Given the fact that the director-general has just pointed out issues of commercial-in-confidence, whilst the department has valuations for all of its properties—based on that we are able to assess how we think we might be able to put in the estimates, what we think we might be able to have as land sales or asset sales—it is not one that I am comfortable taking on notice, but not for any other reason than its commercial-in-confidence aspect.

CHAIR: That brings to a close the non-government sector. I now call on the member for Lytton.

Mr SYMES: I refer to page 3 of the SDS regarding the government's commitment to funding maintenance for schools. Can the minister outline how schools are achieving more bang for their buck by using additional autonomy to undertake maintenance work at their schools?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is something about which we have spoken a fair bit this morning, and we have also spoken a fair bit about it over the last year: the black hole in maintenance which we inherited. For new members—and I notice there are a number of new members here—I am sure they have received feedback. It just shows that in politics there are other issues that come up; in other words, at the moment we are debating a national education agreement for which teachers, principals, students and parents are advocating particular amounts of funding, but one thing that they are all appreciative of is the maintenance funding for all schools in the state which had a maintenance backlog. We have 1,240 state schools, and those issues about maintenance were not being addressed. They were receiving paltry amounts of money with which to patch things up.

Last year we promised up to \$160,000 for schools which had maintenance backlogs. We have announced an extra \$200 million over 2012-13 and 2013-14 through the Advancing Our Schools Maintenance Fund. In Rockhampton a couple of months ago we announced the Fixing Our Schools Fund for 2014-15. As a result, there will be an additional \$100 million for school maintenance. Approximately 700 schools out of 1,200 had their maintenance backlog cleared either this year or next year, and we are looking to bring in as many of the other schools as possible, given that we had a \$292 million backlog and we are injecting \$300 million into getting rid of many of those problems.

There are other capital investments for which we have acknowledged our thanks. No maintenance funding has gone into the Building the Education Revolution program. Teachers and principals have told me that they had to spend \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year on maintenance in their schools, money which could otherwise have been put into teaching and learning resources. State Schools of Tomorrow is a very, very significant program that was also delivered without operating funding. With an increasing asset portfolio you are going to have an increasing maintenance issue with which you have to deal, so our funding allocations for 2013-14 will target schools with the highest maintenance liability.

We have also made it easier for schools to get the job done by untying maintenance from QBuild and opening it to private providers. That is especially being taken up in non-regional areas—QBuild often still provides a lot of assistance in regional areas—where some of the schools band together. Three hundred and seventy-four schools chose to deliver planned and routine breakdown maintenance by going directly to the market. They have improved the value for money that schools gain from the maintenance dollar, and it accelerates the reduction of the maintenance backlog. In Proserpine last week the local principal showed me some examples of the maintenance work which had been undertaken. Instead of patching and repairing louvred or old style windows, by spending a little bit more, and also by bundling the quote together, the contractor was able provide what almost looks like a new classroom in terms of the windows.

QBuild as well, by the way, have become much more competitive. My colleague the Hon. Tim Mander, the Minister for Housing and Public Works, told me that QBuild have increased their contract details by about 17 per cent, so they have also become very, very focused. On average, schools are finding efficiencies of almost 20 per cent, so we are getting five jobs done for the price of four. In Proserpine I spoke to local state school principals who do not have the resources to have their administrative officers manage jobs. They are not experts at getting quotes and tenders, so the high schools have done that in a manner where they can bundle all of the jobs together.

There are no rules that prohibit state schools or state high schools from getting together to achieve more efficiencies, and we are also working with the school community to make sure they prioritise things that can and should be done. Instead of us saying, 'This can only be spent on that,' we want to give communities and principals the right to say, 'This is a very important thing that we want to have done,' and balance it against the maintenance that might be on the register. We are looking at ways of giving our principals more autonomy in those areas as well.

Mr LATTER: Given the Leader of the Opposition's very sudden interest in assets and fiscal management, I would like to ask the minister to again address the issue of the \$300 million maintenance backlog left by the previous government. Minister, what steps have been taken to help clear the backlog as referenced on pages 3 and 5 of the SDS? Minister, may I go so far as to ask you: in practical terms on the ground, what is it that my schools can do now that they were not able to do previously?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I have seen it at Waterford West and Waterford. At the schools which I have attended, the principals can tell you that, instead of being told by QBuild—as happened in the past—that the rules said this is what they had to do with the particular thing that they were trying to fix, we have made it a lot easier for them to be able to say, 'But we want to be able to work with the contractor on this'—whether it is QBuild or not—to make sure there is more flexibility about achieving the things that are important for that school community.

I have already mentioned that we have had schools funded up to a maximum of \$160,000 with over half of the state schools, or 700, receiving funding equal to their pre-existing liability. I mentioned that they could go directly to the market to procure contractors or elect to remain with QBuild. There are 903 schools retaining QBuild, so of course QBuild is supported. When I had those issues in Proserpine, one of the local schools had had trouble getting QBuild to attend before the end of the financial year. I then passed that on to the Minister for Housing and Public Works to ensure we had that focus.

QBuild workers are acknowledged throughout the government as being passionate and determined. They understand that there is a real focus on getting things done. QBuild have achieved savings by brokering and bundling maintenance work across schools to create larger work packages, and they have taken this to the marketplace. As at 19 July this coordinated approach has seen the program achieve savings ranging from six to 22 per cent, with an average saving of 16 per cent. That allows schools to further address ongoing maintenance issues. We will continue to work with our schools to ensure that key maintenance issues are addressed. We will not go back to the lack of commitment to facilities which support positive educational environments for our children which was shown by the former government.

Hermit Park in Townsville is another example which has just come to mind, where a cluster of schools got a great deal with innovative solutions. From the feedback I have received from principals, we know that they are not experts in construction, and we need to make sure that their administrative officers get the support that they need. We will continue to work with them. If they choose to stay with QBuild, where things are done a little more prescriptively and in a way that they may understand more easily, they are welcome to do that. But we want to make the system more efficient so that the dollars go where they should, and that is fixing those problems that we know exist in our schools and which affect the morale of our schools.

CHAIR: It is now 10.30, and I declare that at this stage we will adjourn the hearing.

Proceedings suspended from 10.30 am to 11.01 am

CHAIR: The hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee is now resumed. We will continue with the organisational unit of Education. I now call on the member for Condamine.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My question is to the minister. Minister, I refer to page 77 of Budget Paper No. 2 which relates to year 7 transitions. It is noted that it is one of only four reasons for growth in expenses in this budget. Will you seriously consider supporting exemptions for schools in remote areas without high schools where this is their desire? If you understand what I am saying, I refer to those primary schools that do not have a high school and the year 7 students need to stay in those schools to keep up numbers and the kids do not want to go. Would you consider supporting that?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. While we are speaking about remote schools, I should correct what I said about the most western school being in Boullia. It is Bedourie, which is eight hours west of Longreach. That just shows how far flung our schools are. I thank the honourable member for the question about Flying Start. I know that he and members of his

party and obviously regional and rural members have had concerns about the impacts of moving year 7 into high school, and we are acutely aware of those concerns that parents have. We have worked with schools and communities in these locations and will continue to do so. We have also worked with the Isolated Children's Parents Association. We want to hear about those issues and we want to respond with strategies that will support all families through the transition.

We have consulted extensively with these stakeholders to undertake a review of the educational needs of students. We know that geographically isolated families living in areas where there is no local high school have a range of options for their children, including financial support to attend boarding schools, student hostels or live with a relative closer to a school that can provide the educational opportunities that they are seeking. Many isolated families already choose to access educational services through distance education, and by 2015 year 7 will be offered as the first year of high school for all state schools providing distance education. Families consider a range of factors when deciding the best option for their year 7 children, and I know that parents—as a parent myself—may well be concerned about the age of their children that are moving away. The Mayor of Cloncurry, Andrew Daniels, has mentioned this as an issue, too, to me. So we want to work with these impacted families. I have said in the parliament as well as here today that we want to work with these impacted families. It is an important structural reform. I know that, for example, at Cloncurry Mayor Andrew Daniels is concerned about the viability potentially of the local school when they lose year 7 going into high school. So we want to strengthen the financial support but speak to them about what their concerns are. We are lifting the living away from home allowance to the secondary rate.

I also want to mention though that, because of the prep year, some of the issues or concerns about year 7 going into high school can be assuaged by the fact that half of these students will be turning 13. It will be their eighth year of school and it is important to acknowledge that. It is not as though it is like the old days when I was at school and was four when I started in grade 1 at Burleigh Heads State School and was due to finish school when I was still 16. That would have of course been very different in year 7 being 11 as opposed to what we now know given the extra year of prep. But we want to work with all of those communities and I have heard the message loud and clear about the concerns of some of those rural and regional communities. We want to work with them to work through those issues in their local schools.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the director-general. Director-General, earlier we were speaking about the Fortitude Valley State School. Can you confirm that the Fortitude Valley State School site has a high commercial value?

Dr Watterston: There is no norm against your description of it having a high commercial value, so I am not sure. High as opposed to what?

Ms PALASZCZUK: You said it was commercial-in-confidence to tell us the details of how much, but it is obviously of high commercial value—yes or no?

Dr Watterston: It is of commercial value. High is a subjective—

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is in Fortitude Valley. It is in the inner city.

Dr Watterston: Of course.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Are you familiar with Fortitude Valley?

Dr Watterston: I am familiar with Fortitude Valley. I am not trying to be pedantic, but high is a subjective term. High in comparison to what?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Director-General, are you familiar with this Schools Planning Commission that the minister just released?

Dr Watterston: I am.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Great. Over the break I was able to have a look at the Schools Planning Commission for the demand maps and the mapping indicates for the area around Fortitude Valley it is the highest growth rate with some two per cent growth each year for the next 10 to 20 years. Is that correct?

Dr Watterston: I will have to refer to the deputy director-general, Jeff Hunt, in terms of—

Ms PALASZCZUK: You are the director-general.

Dr Watterston: I am the director-general.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, so that is correct?

Dr Watterston: Upon confirmation of the figures that you are using—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to table that. It was just released.

Dr Watterston: Sure. I do not have those figures in front of me—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I seek leave to table the documents.

Mr LANGBROEK: That is a very subjective selection of statistics, Madam Chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, Minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: But it is.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am asking the director-general. I am entitled to ask the director-general. You have just released maps which clearly show that Fortitude Valley is in a high-growth rate—some two per cent increase a year.

Mr LANGBROEK: No, where there is going to be a decline of students over the next decade in total amounts. You can just take statistics from there and we can take statistics from there—

Ms PALASZCZUK: But I am quoting from your maps and, Minister, I am asking the director-general. Please do not interrupt. Director-General, I am happy for your explanation please.

Dr Watterston: I do not have the map in front of me, so I am happy to—

Ms PALASZCZUK: It has been tabled. We can pass it to you.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Inala. Leave has been granted to table these maps and these documents.

Dr Watterston: Sure. So we would need to reference that against the school-age population and certainly reflect the growth within the school population. There is a number of ways to measure this. Can I seek your indulgence to refer to the deputy director-general of corporate services.

Mr Hunt: The population mapping obviously is important to us in terms of facilities planning, and that is largely why we have been happy to undertake the task of the Schools Planning Commission with the commission itself. With regard to the mapping that we are talking about and the population growth, obviously you would be aware that population forecasting is in age brackets. The school population is obviously of interest to this department in its planning exercise. I would just stress at the moment that there is no decision taken with regard to the Fortitude Valley site. So any question is very speculative.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I know, but in referring to the maps am I correct in my assumption that the maps show that there is going to be an increase in population in that area that has just been released today?

Mr Hunt: There is some population growth in the area—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you.

Mr Hunt:—and I would say from the rest of the mapping we know from the schools in the inner city or the inner ring that the population has been declining over time. There is some small growth back, but largely that is out of catchment enrolment growth. So we need to manage the asset portfolio again across the range of the needs of those opportunities, and where we invest our capital spending is important to us. We want to make sure that we utilise the facilities that we have already got to their full extent.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you. Director-General, the closest school to Fortitude Valley State School I understand is Brisbane Central; is that correct?

Dr Watterston: I will have to take your word for that.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to seek an answer and my understanding is that it is at capacity. I would just like some advice from the department if that is true.

Dr Watterston: Sure, and again I will refer to the deputy director-general of corporate services.

Mr Hunt: Capacity in state schools is obviously a moot point in that where there is increased demand we will build. As we have done with this government, as with other governments, we will always look at the best option for the school community and if there are new facilities required then we can add to the built environment to ensure that we can accommodate the students. There are two schools. There is New Farm and Brisbane Central that are the closest to Fortitude Valley. I guess both of those schools have enrolments that are close to the built environment capacity at the present time.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sorry, but let me just clarify. With regard to the two schools closest to Fortitude Valley, their enrolments are close to capacity; correct?

Mr Hunt: They have additional capacity within them and we are continuing to work with those school communities to get the best solution. You also have to remember that year 7 is about to move out of those schools into high school which will free up capacity. So there are options to accommodate additional students in those schools given the structural changes that we are undertaking to the structure of schooling in Queensland.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Okay. My next question is to the director-general. I also notice some maps were tabled by the school commission today around Toowoomba. I note that there is a one per cent to two per cent annual increase around the Toowoomba South State School and, once again, a two per cent increase around both Wyreema and Charlton. Can you confirm this for the committee please?

Dr Watterston: So, again—I am sorry to have to keep repeating—due to the short time I have been in the role, I will refer to the director-general of corporate services.

Ms PALASZCZUK: But, Director-General, with all due respect, this was just released by your minister and you are the director-general of the department. I would—

Mr LANGBROEK: With all due respect, Madam Chair—

Ms PALASZCZUK:—have thought that you would be familiar with the details of this document.

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, surely one would not expect that the director-general will know about places like Wyreema and Charlton as specific geographical areas, just as I would not expect the Leader of the Opposition to know something about Victoria or the ACT if she just moved there.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to ask you, Minister, because you have put them on your list. You have put them on your list. You have just released this schools commission report which is showing growth in these regions.

Mr LANGBROEK: And I am happy to take the question from the honourable member—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you.

Mr LANGBROEK:—and to say that the separation should be between the Schools Planning Commission, which is planning for the next 10 and 20 years, and the process that we are currently going through, which is looking at these eight schools—of which Wyreema and Charlton are two of the schools that are affected—because the previous government did not have a plan to look at viability. It was something that I had to do. So whilst we are looking at school planning into the 10- and 20-year zone, we need to get away from anecdotal suggestions that because we are going to have this particular growth and consider whether there are alternative schools that are nearby that could be accessed they are the aspects on which we have looked at the school viability process, which is separate to the Schools Planning Commission.

Ms PALASZCZUK: So, Minister, can you confirm with the data you have released today that Fortitude Valley State School, Toowoomba South, Wyreema and Charlton are in high-growth areas? These are your maps.

Mr LANGBROEK: Actually, no. What I will do is I cannot confirm that, because—and I stand corrected—I understand that the maps we have released today are for Townsville, for Brisbane north and for Caloundra. We are going to prospectively do the Toowoomba planning and the Toowoomba maps are going to be done next. Again, I am happy to come back and correct the record if that is true, but the assertions the opposition leader is making are not correct in Fortitude Valley where, whilst there might be population growth, our departmental modelling is showing that there are other schools that students may and could potentially attend should the closure go ahead and that the school based population—school students—are not necessarily going to increase in that area. In Toowoomba I do not think we have released the maps at all, but we are committed to doing it. But we are also saying that in some of those there are nearby schools that students can attend should a closure happen.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Minister, I refer to the budget measures for 2013-14 and the Great Teachers = Great Results initiative. Can you explain to the committee why in 2013-14 a grand total of \$1.257 million has been allocated to your new policy initiative which, when broken down, will not even provide each school student with a pencil?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am very happy to speak about our Great Teachers = Great Results policy. We are planning for the implementation of that policy over a four-year period. Of course, there is some planning that has to happen. I know that that

is something that is foreign to the honourable member, having come from a government where they would see a problem and have to try to fix it up straightaway. This is a program that ramps up in those years between 2015 and 2019. I note that it is very similar to the proposed expenditure from the federal government which is trying to sell us a Gonski type deal that says, 'No extra money in 2014 or '15, but trust us; we'll be doing it in 2018-19 and '20'.

From the start, what we have said about Great Teachers = Great Results is that it was going to be a five-year plan but with a year in the planning, which is next year. That is why next year we will be getting the details across the 15 areas of those plans. We are going to make sure that we have a structured annual performance review from 2014 and then from 2015 the bulk of those actions happen. That is why the bulk of the funding happens from 2015.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Minister, can you explain what this \$1.257 million out of your \$537 million is going to be spent on over the next financial year?

Mr LANGBROEK: As I have said, given that we have—

Ms PALASZCZUK: \$1.257 million.

Mr LANGBROEK: I acknowledge the amount that the honourable member has mentioned.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is quite embarrassing, isn't it, Minister?

Mr LANGBROEK: Given that it is a plan for four years, next year being the year when we bring in this annual performance review, we have significant amounts of funding that will go to the mentoring program, strengthening requirements for the experienced senior teacher positions, an accelerated pathway for high-performing teachers and creating new master teacher positions. Those are not the sorts of things that can be done overnight. It is important to note that in the meantime we have increased the overall budget in Education by over six per cent in Queensland. This is an extra amount of funding for which we have been unable to get acknowledgement from the federal government in terms of the significant contribution we have made, both in maintenance funding and, of course, in Great Teachers = Great Results.

However, it does not mean that we are reducing any funding in those other areas and that is why we have increased funding overall. This is extra money above and beyond what had been promised by the previous government. It has been promised by us. We are going to make sure that we plan to deliver it properly and not do as the previous government did with things such as the Health payroll that ended up costing us \$1.2 billion because they did not plan properly. We need to ensure that when we are offering scholarships or master teacher positions we do not just have a process in place that means we will have a blowout in costs because of the number of people who apply for things such as the solar bonuses and all of those things that are now creating great imposts on our budget. As minister I am tasked with making sure that I stick to my budget and that is what I am committed to doing.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Chair, I have one more question. Minister, I refer to the Schools Planning Commission document that I understand you have just publicly released. For the interest of the minister and the director-general, I now seek leave to table the school infrastructure demand maps for Toowoomba.

Mr LANGBROEK: Do you have a question?

Ms PALASZCZUK: You said that you did not believe that Toowoomba was part of your Schools Planning Commission maps. Minister, are you misleading the estimates hearing?

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, can I thank the honourable member for the question—

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is your document. You released the document and you are not familiar with the contents of the document.

Mr LANGBROEK: As I understand it, the demand mapping that shows the specific schools that we will need—for example, that shows that we will need 23 schools in particular areas—were for the three areas of northern Brisbane, Caloundra and Townsville.

Ms PALASZCZUK: This is on your website. My staff can get it from the website, but you are not familiar with your document?

Mr LANGBROEK: We will be doing more detailed mapping for other areas and that is the point that I made.

Mr LATTER: Madam Chair, I raise a point of order. A question has been asked. I do want to hear the answer to the question. I would respectfully ask that you rule that the Leader of the Opposition stop interrupting the minister.

CHAIR: Thank you, member. At this stage, I am happy to table this document, the schools infrastructure demand maps.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I just pointed out then, the detail that I have provided today via the Schools Planning Commission was very clear about three particular areas that I have already identified. I have said, as I said before, that as I understood it more specific information about the particular area of Toowoomba will be coming subsequently. I am happy to provide it but, as I understand it, that very detailed information—

Ms PALASZCZUK: But it is there. It is on your website.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to come back and advise in just a moment.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We look forward to it.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Inala. The minister has answered that question. The time for non-government questions has come to an end. Minister, independent public schools are referenced on pages 3 and 5 of the SDS. Can you advise how the 26 schools selected in the initial IPS round have benefited from additional autonomy?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank you, Madam Chair, for the question. Of course, I know many members are interested in this, because we have just put out the time frames for schools to apply potentially to become an independent public school from next year. It is part of our recognition that the best decision making occurs at a local level, with a principal being able to directly respond to local community needs and aspirations. In 2013, 26 schools were selected based on their support from the local community. They submitted applications detailing their capacity to assume greater responsibility for their affairs. Something that I know the director-general is certainly aware of is that centralised decision making, on the one hand, disempowers principals to whom, on the other hand, we were trying to say, 'We want you to be in charge of your own community.' That does not mean we will not support them in major areas that they are not necessarily equipped to cope with, such as payroll or HR issues that can be centrally dealt with. However, we certainly want autonomy in decision making where it involves having less red tape and making sure that their students have innovative educational programs. Of course, those are the very things that principals want to be able to provide for their specific geographic areas because of what they might be able to provide for their students in areas through connections with chambers of commerce, connections with universities, connections with particular trade organisations if they are in parts of Queensland where they have a strong desire for those sorts of professions or trades.

It is a voluntary process with support from the school community. There will be a total of 120 schools over four years. We want a broad cross-section of schools from across Queensland. It involves a \$50,000 start-up grant to support the transition, with an additional \$50,000 to be provided annually. It is anticipated that a further 34 schools will be selected to take part in the initiative in 2014. As I have said, they have the flexibility to shape their own strategic direction and approve specialist curriculum offerings that suit the needs of their students. As I have mentioned, they can explore the way they work with local businesses, industry and community organisations, providing even greater opportunities for their students through new and creative sponsorship models and partnerships.

Last week I was at Kirwan State High School in Townsville. That school has a connection to the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy, which delivers vocational education and training for employment in the resources sector. I was also in their Outback Cafe, where students learn about hospitality. As well as providing support for the four pillars, we need to have students in the support services where they can get valuable jobs, qualifications and skills, even potentially while at university should they choose not to follow that trade or that qualification for the rest of their lives—as Gen Y often does, they will chop and change.

In the south-east of the state, the Cleveland District State High School has a partnership with the Confucius Institute at QUT, giving students the chance to immerse themselves in Chinese Mandarin. That is very valuable, as I found on a recent trade mission to China, as we will have students with knowledge of a language that enables them, through their other studies at university, to use their knowledge of the two different business systems of China and Queensland and Australia to augment our economic and social relationships with another country.

They have the freedom to directly recruit staff. That has enabled many students to build innovative teams to drive projects such as literacy or technology programs that are ultimately leading to improved outcomes for all students. I also point out that it is very similar to a federal program empowering 131 local schools, I think, which involved similar resources, but probably not the same

reporting back to make sure that schools are actually doing things. That is why there is a direct relationship between the director-general and the principals in our chosen schools to ensure that we are not just giving them resources and saying, 'We want you to be autonomous.' We want them to report on how they are succeeding in their autonomy so that that can be used as an example for other principals who would like to go down the same path but who need some reassurance that if they are going to be taken off the teat of Mary Street, if I can put it like that, they will be empowered to make sure they have strong relationships with their parents and their communities. That is something that we are encouraging all of our principals to do. There is no doubt that some of them are apprehensive about the change that comes with saying, 'We actually do want to make sure that you are more autonomous; you do have the power to do it, but we want you to feel empowered to do it,' just as the federal government has done with its scheme. This is a diverse state with diverse communities and one size does not fit all. We want to ensure that they are committed and they will continue to be part of the strong state school system.

Mr BOOTHMAN: In line with the extra autonomy, which has sparked a lot of interest certainly in the Albert schools such as Upper Coomera State College and Coomera Springs State School, I refer to page 3 of the SDS. Minister, can you explain how principals and other school leaders will be assisted to use their new autonomy to improve student outcomes?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. We know that it is a complex and demanding role being a school leader. Something that I have already said to the committee this morning is that we have to have a collaborative and productive school culture that will deliver quality education for every child. We want to reward school leaders by giving them training in schools if they thought that they may not be able to become an independent public school, to make sure that they are upskilled and understand the processes. That is why we have this particular expression of interest out there already. We want principals to understand that they can receive a performance bonus if they are employed on or are transitioned to a performance based fixed-term contract, demonstrate high performance in their annual performance review and have completed or enrolled in a graduate certificate or higher degree in a relevant field.

From 2016, all new principal and deputy principal positions will be offered on three-year contract terms, with contracts setting clear expectations regarding school outcomes, including student academic performance, engagement and school management. Enrolment in or completion of a graduate certificate or a higher degree in a relevant field will be a requisite for obtaining a principal or deputy principal position. Contract extension will be dependent on completion of this qualification and demonstration of satisfactory performance in the annual performance review process. Implementation of this initiative will be progressed as part of the next round of enterprise bargaining negotiations.

We want to unshackle principals and empower them to lead, but we want them to lead their school community with a keen eye to their mission of improving outcomes for every student, as I know they already are. We want to give them the framework and flexibility. I want to reassure principals that we will always need 1,240 good principals and we want to support them in their attempts to lead their schools as well as they can. For those who feel they would like to become an IPS or a principal, up to now there has been a certain process that you go through, which is just an automatic process of career progression, but in every speciality or every profession upskilling is a prerequisite to getting to those higher positions. I know that the director-general has something to add, so I will hand over to him for a comment.

Dr Watterston: If I can just refer to the element of the member's question that talked about improving students' outcomes, I think that is a really crucial point around all considerations of any form of autonomy. Autonomy is a term that is used differently in different jurisdictions. Certainly in Queensland autonomy is just a different business model. But there is no doubt, no matter which business model we put in place—that is, being directed and working within policies from the centre or facilitating and making decisions closest to the grassroots in an IPS—that we do need to improve outcomes. It is a readiness and preparation by the principals to use the flexibilities that are created through autonomy.

Hand in hand with autonomy is accountability. If I reference your question, there is no point giving schools or principals autonomy if results do not improve. I do not think that is always well understood. It was part of the reason I was very keen to be able to come to this position knowing that the autonomy agenda was still one that would be evolving as we go forward.

As I look around and see the IPSs that have been able to use those flexibilities that have been put in place as a business model to be able to direct their own learning and be the architects of their own improvement trajectory then I see already some really fine developments in the Queensland

state education system that has enabled improvements to be created where perhaps they may not have been possible in the past. It is those flexibilities that allow principals to take full responsibility and be accountable for the way that their school charts its progress.

Certainly it is surprising to me that often programs are rolled out across regions where there is one problem of practice that all schools are addressing. That is clearly not always the case. The opportunity to be autonomous and to be able to identify what those problems of practice are within your own school and then seek, from an evidence base, strategies that will directly relate to your unique situation is one that is a hallmark of practice that is already in place.

The idea of autonomy in the Queensland state education system is one that I would rather refer to as collaborative autonomy. We do not set schools free. We do not set principals off on their own pathway. They are part of a system. The beauty of being part of a system is the expertise and support that is available from schools within the same area but also from the central office. But also what we would expect is that those high-performing schools that are autonomous would have the opportunity to share that learning and share that progress with other schools around them. The collaboration as part of this autonomy process is one that will inform and improve the whole system. I think your point in the question is really relevant. It must be a way to improve students or else autonomy would be no better than any other business model.

CHAIR: I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, with reference to the highlights outlined on page 2 of the SDS, could you please outline what evidence there is supporting the continued investment made in early years centres across 15 communities?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. These early years centres are one-stop shops that provide integrated early childhood education and care, family and parenting support and child and maternal health services to families expecting a child or with children aged up to eight years. As I have travelled around I have seen a couple of these early years centres. They help women, before they have had children in some cases, to prepare for motherhood with antenatal services. They provide antenatal and postnatal services.

There is general acknowledgement that the early years are so important. But as a government we have to make sure that we are providing wraparound services. If in particular communities there are health needs but parents are not willing to go to a formal centre, if we can have early years centres where we have an integrated service delivery approach that includes multidisciplinary teams then that will make a big difference to the families who we are seeking to serve.

These multidisciplinary teams can include early childhood teachers, social and family support workers and child health professionals. This is most effective for families. I have been to a number of them. There is one at Acacia Ridge. There are small and large centres. There are centres at Acacia Ridge, Beaudesert, Bentley Park, Bribie Island, Browns Plains, Caboolture, Coomera Springs, Deception Bay, Edmonton, Gordonvale, Labrador, Morayfield, Narangba, Nerang and Woodford.

The locations of the outreach services may change over time in response to community demands and needs. The evaluation of the Early Years Centre initiative, which was completed in late 2012, found evidence of improved social, behavioural and developmental outcomes for children. Parents reported they had achieved key goals for themselves and their children, particularly in relation to confidence, socialisation and educational and behavioural development.

I know from having seen them that universal services such as playgroups and maternal and child health services are particularly welcomed because they are welcoming in their very nature, do not stigmatise families and are an effective means for staff to identify and support families with greater needs. One testimony from a parent said—

In times where I haven't known what to do I have gone to the Early Years Centre first and nine times out of 10 they have been able to help me. I go to them before going to the doctor.

There is proof that in a less formal setting but where there is someone from Health this works. I have seen health workers from Minister Springborg's department at these centres. In a very comfortable setting they may be able to say to a mother or father, 'Would you mind if I have a look at your young child.' They could check for sight or hearing issues or for other disorders that the child might have.

One early years centre staff member commented—

Since working with the team, both kids have flourished in confidence and language and they are now going to kindy two days a week. Dad has improved with confidence in parenting and disciplining the children appropriately. He's still working with the family support worker.

You can see that we have a number of different departments working together collaboratively with less siloing.

CHAIR: I now call the member for Condamine.

Mr HOPPER: I refer to pages 3 and 5 of the SDS and the independent public schools program. Is the independent public schools program in any way a move to privatise any state school in Queensland?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I actually just addressed this particular matter, but you may not have heard me. I said at the end of my answer that it is very important that they stay a strong part of the state school system. That is something that we have been very careful about saying. It is really about the things that the director-general and I were speaking about—that is, being autonomous. It is collaborative autonomy—collaboration between parents and their local community via the partnership they might have.

I can reassure members that they are state schools and they will stay state schools but we are giving them some extra resources to do the things that they know are important in their community. In the honourable member's community it might be a particular focus on agricultural programs as an example. I know that that is something that is important to the whole state as one of the four pillars of our economy. In the honourable member's area part of the community might say, 'We would like to have some sort of agricultural program.' It could be other things. It is about giving them extra resources.

I have seen at some independent public schools, principals of high schools, because year 7 is going into high school, take their extra resources and go to their hub of schools—the state primary schools they are supporting—and help the music programs because they are going to be losing the year 7 members of their band. In the high school they may have a significant cultural program. That is where they may choose to use those extra resources. I give the general assurance that there is the aim to have 120 IPSs out of 1,240 schools. They are always going to be state schools.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you for answering that question. I refer to the same pages of the SDS. Minister, can you confirm that when a community objects to their school becoming an independent public school an application from that school will not be considered even if submitted without community support?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is something that I mentioned in my answer about independent public schools. I would expect a principal to know the community and to be in touch with the community. A significant part of the support for becoming an independent public school comes from a school council and the school community generally.

Having said that, though, it is interesting that last year when we were in the middle of an enterprise bargain negotiation that the Queensland Teachers Union was opposed to independent public schools publicly but not privately. I went to a meeting at one school where the teachers expressed that they did not want to be an independent public school. I can safely say to the committee that if a school becomes an independent public school and a teacher does not want to be part of it they can leave. No-one is making them stay there. Coming back to the crux of the question, I cannot imagine that a principal, knowing that the majority of the community is opposed to becoming an independent public school, for whatever reason—even if it is that they do not want the extra resources or do not want the ability to have particular programs that the principal and others have suggested might benefit the community—that the principal would go ahead with trying to make an application to do so. The principal has to have the school community, via the school council, involved. I would have thought that that school council would be making it pretty clear that there should not be an application.

That is very different to having some sort of organisation or union pressure to use LCCs, the local consultative communities, inappropriately when they are supposed to be an advisory mechanism and reinterpreting how LCCs are going to be used. That is not going to happen. I think we are going to see a significant number of schools applying this year who did not apply last year because of that union pressure.

It is a free process. No-one is making anyone do it. We believe it is a good thing. We honestly have the interests of students, teachers and principals in our thoughts at all times. I hope that answers the question.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to move on to early education and care. I refer to page 7 of the SDS in relation to expenses. I notice that the adjusted budget is roughly \$332 million; however, the estimated actual for 2012-13 is only \$234 million. Minister, can you explain the \$97 million shortfall in expenditure in relation to early childhood education and care when this is such an important issue out there for parents and is a very important initiative for the department?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I acknowledge her acknowledgement of the importance of the early years. In that case, it would be nice if she could pass that on to Kate Ellis and Kevin Rudd because it is Kate Ellis and Kevin Rudd who are giving us more to do with less with a program that now ends in December 2014.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is your underspend.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am coming to that. The important issue, though, is that we acknowledge the importance of early childhood. You will see that our funding for 2013-14 is also going to be less than it was simply because we have had significantly publicised cuts to early childhood and universities that have meant that we as a government, having raised our kindergarten participation rate from 26 per cent to 77 per cent through a national partnership, which we acknowledge, face significant uncertainty surrounding this. The problem we face is building new kindergartens in areas that potentially may not be funded beyond 2014.

We are absolutely committed to the early years. We wish we could see the same commitment from Kate Ellis, who tells us that she believes that some of the problems with the states not getting enough early childhood facilities relates to planning measures. At a ministerial council meeting she raised that there should be a working party about planning issues. I think it is cost that is the issue. It was quite well publicised yesterday how much it costs parents even with rebates. That is a significant issue as well.

When it comes to the crux of the question—question on notice No. 475 that the honourable member asked me on 7 June—and the answer about the contribution being \$36 million lower than the original 2012-13 budget estimate, this is as a result of re-phasing of planned expenditure associated with the universal access to kindergarten non-government capital grant initiatives, lower levels of depreciation and other capital related expenses.

The decrease of \$10.7 million from the 2012-13 original budget to the 2013-14 budget is largely the result of higher levels of deferred expenditure into 2012-13 than into 2013-14, the completion of 24 non-state school kindy construction projects in 2012-13, as well as lower levels of depreciation and capital works expense.

But I can confirm that there have been no significant cuts to funding programs to approved services. As part of an annual review of funding, small programs such as the PPP parenting program ceased in 2012-13.

As I say, I would be happy to work with the honourable member to try to make sure that the funding we have had for early childhood continues beyond December 2014 to provide some relief for communities who would like to be able to have participation in kindy services, but the federal government has not been able to provide that up to now.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Minister, can we take on notice then the details of the \$97 million shortfall, because I think in your answer there you addressed about \$37 million?

Mr LANGBROEK: Certainly, sure.

Ms PALASZCZUK: How does the department propose to meet the targets of 95 per cent participation for kindergartens when the budget has been slashed?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. The budget has been slashed by the federal government. Kevin Rudd and Kate Ellis are slashing our budget.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is your \$97 million shortfall.

Mr LANGBROEK: They are slashing our budget into the future. We will always have targets—and I remember sitting where the honourable member is over the last eight years looking at targets that the previous government set. We do not apologise for having those targets, many of which were set in place in the past, which my department and the government are working assiduously to try to attain. But it is going to be very, very difficult when we get to the latter part of a target like that, when we do not make kindergarten compulsory, to get those last ones there. It is going to be extremely difficult in an area of responsibility for which the state was never responsible—it is the federal government who have been responsible for early childhood. We have had a national partnership. It is

due to finish in December 2014. I can promise the honourable member that we will not be getting to our targets unless we get that funding from the federal government beyond December 2014. We are aiming for the targets. We are happy to have the targets. We are happy to build the kindergartens. But we cannot do it if we do not have certainty of funding, and that is the point that Premier Campbell Newman has been making for the last six months about cuts to kindergartens and universities.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Minister, I refer to page 14 of the SDS and I want to talk a bit about the targets here. In relation to Indigenous children, the target estimate for 2012-13 is 78 per cent. Your estimated actual is 66 per cent. But in 2013-14 it is up to 95 per cent. Minister, can you explain the large discrepancies in these figures?

Mr LANGBROEK: Honourable member, you have gone through those numbers quite quickly. Can you go through them again—page 14, for Indigenous students in which category?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Proportion of enrolments in an early childhood education program.

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The target estimate for 2012-13 is 78 per cent. Your estimated actual is 66 per cent. But then by 2013-14 it is going to jump to 95 per cent. Can you explain how that is going to happen?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. In relation to the 95 per cent target, we do not have different targets for Indigenous students compared to non-Indigenous students. Of course amongst our most challenging areas to try to provide some of these services, and amongst the last areas that we are going to get to, are some of these Indigenous areas. If anything, it crystallises the point that I have already made to the committee about the potential cuts to early childhood spending and being able to provide those services. It is going to be very difficult to get to 95 per cent when we are at 66 per cent.

But, having said that, only in the last week, in NAIDOC Week, I released our post Closing the Gap plan. Closing the Gap is something to which both sides signed up, and of course we all agree that all of our students are important. But our most disadvantaged students and our Indigenous students are amongst a cohort where we have seen significant improvements both in schooling and year 12 retention and in early childhood. To see those statistics going up is encouraging, but Closing the Gap was only about schools.

Our Solid partners Solid futures plan that we announced in NAIDOC Week is for the next four years, post Closing the Gap, and it is all about making sure that we do not have those silos of saying, 'Schooling is schooling,' when early childhood is a very important pathway into schooling, just as schooling should then lead to training and/or universities and employment. That has been something that my department works very hard at, making sure that everything we are doing is focused on getting Indigenous students in as well. I acknowledge that that target of 78 per cent is one that we are still working towards and will continue to do.

I know the director-general has something that he would like to add here, but I can assure the honourable member that we want to make sure that we get more people involved in our children and family centres, which are like those early years centres, as well. I opened two children and family centres in Doomadgee and Mornington Island in the last month. If we can get those parents understanding the importance of kindy, then they are more likely to get into an early childhood education program as well. Those CFCs, children and family centres, will be having some of those education programs to enable us to get to the target. Director-General?

Dr Watterston: If I can just add that from 2008 to now there has been an increase of 37 per cent in terms of Indigenous attendance at kindergarten programs. While your point was that 95 per cent seems like a rather large task in terms of a goal, there really is a high aspiration. I think there is no point in the department going backwards now in that aspiration. We really need to strive much harder to make sure that we can address the very strong need that is there. As the minister said, there are children and family centres which are in place. There are also targeted programs delivered by early years centres to connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with kindy programs. We have prekindergarten grants provided in 14 locations across Queensland for non-government organisations to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to transition between home and early childhood settings, and we are embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in early childhood. A pilot is being implemented in 10 priority locations across Queensland. The program

is building cultural capacity and providing an established welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We also have transport solutions in 11 different areas tailored to transport students to programs within communities that will increase access and state-wide community awareness raising.

So we have a number of strategies in place. I agree it seems a long stretch to get to 95 per cent, but I think it needs to be held front and centre that, not just from an aspirational point of view but certainly from a need point of view, if students are going to be successful and have pathways that give them options in life then we really need to make sure that that happens at the very earliest opportunity. I have talked to my department about making sure that we strive as hard as we can to achieve that target as quickly as we can.

CHAIR: I call the member for Woodridge.

Mrs SCOTT: Minister, how much money is being expended for the advertising campaign for Great teachers = Great results?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I ask where in the SDS the honourable member is referring?

CHAIR: Would the minister prefer to take this on notice?

Mr LANGBROEK: No. I just want to have a reference.

Mrs SCOTT: It is on page 3 under highlights of school education. It is one of the key highlights included there.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. As we have discussed already, this is a significant investment of \$537 million over five years. We are making sure, of course, that we let Queenslanders know about it, but it is a very modest amount of spending compared to some of the campaigns we have seen in the last few days. It is \$331,436, but that contrasts with \$50 million by the federal government trying to sell the Gonski modelling and millions of dollars on the new Kevin Rudd sending people to New Guinea policy. Across government—I know the Premier gave the statistics the other day—the spending on advertising is a fraction of what it has been. We think this is money well spent—it is \$331,436, as I have already said.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time for non-government questions has expired. I now call the member for Lytton.

Mr SYMES: Minister, I refer to page 3 of the SDS regarding strengthening discipline under the Great Teachers = Great Results initiative. Can the minister please explain what steps are being taken to improve discipline in Queensland schools?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I have already referred this morning to the fact that we have 15 strategies in the Great teachers = Great results action plan. As I have travelled the state and spoken to many principals about these issues about what they have to do when they want to do simple things like give detentions, there were significant regulations about that—similarly for exclusions, similarly for appeals processes—where the power seems to have been given to recalcitrant students who know their rights rather than to principals and teachers who want to get on with teaching the majority of students who want to do the right thing. That takes into account the fact that these students may have other issues that, as I have said, we want to make sure we acknowledge and deal with and potentially in the worst cases put them in different situations where they can continue their education so that they get the benefits of an education. But we want to cut red tape, give greater flexibility, and increase power to principals to deal with school discipline and give them more discretionary powers to discipline students in their school so they can respond quickly and firmly to problem behaviour.

As I have said already, regional teams or senior officers in other states sometimes hold disciplinary powers. We trust our state school principals. So we need to have a balance though between flexibility and accountability in maintaining student behaviour. So we have said we want to remove the roadblocks in current legislation and departmental policies which divert the valuable time of principals on to excessive paperwork associated with their disciplinary decisions. That is where principals have said to me they have to spend too much of their time when they would like to be teaching and learning leaders—having to deal with behavioural problems that they then have to try to sort out with regional office executives and people in regional offices.

So the department is working on a range of strategies for implementation in 2014, including removing the red tape from legislation and departmental policies; community service interventions where students will complete tasks beneficial to the community; discipline improvement plans which

require parents to agree to a plan to improve their child's behaviour; and greater flexibility around when detentions can be applied. I have already mentioned conducting discipline audits in all Queensland state schools and expanding relationships with special assistance schools to support students who require highly specialised support for their behavioural needs. Again, in terms of principal forums, we need more of those. We have acknowledged that they cost a lot more. Whether it be at the farm up in Toowoomba or Arethusa College that I have attended in the electorate of Murrumba, they are very labour intensive, but with teachers who can understand, and sometimes with a lot of teacher aides who can understand, the special needs that those students have and who acknowledge those needs, those students can still be given an education and then head into a trade or whatever it is that they can do if they can get other aspects of their life on track.

We are leading the nation in terms of our open approach to publishing disciplinary data. We have said that, as part of our open government strategy, we are happy to print these statistics but we need to make sure that we get the correct interpretation of the statistics. That is why we provide comprehensive school by school detail on the types of disciplinary action taken, the reasons and student characteristics. I have said already too that we have over 2,000 teaching FTEs who deliver targeted intervention.

As I said, there were more than 90 alternative education programs in 2012 including 15 positive learning centres. We know that for different students you need different types of answers. That is why we are committed to making sure that we lead the national safe and supportive school communities—that is, SSSC. It is a working group providing information and advice on bullying and harassment prevention. So, at that end of it as well where the pressures on students become more and more obvious, if that leads to behavioural issues we need to be dealing with the problem from that area as well.

It is a very complex area. It is not as easy as just writing a letter to the editor saying, 'In my day you could kick a kid out of school,' or 'They should be made to do something else or removed from the school environment.' It just doesn't work when we have principals and all of our local communities who are concerned about these kids who are often feeling pressures that hopefully they will come out of or grow through, because there are other pressures they are experiencing and we need to address those as well.

Mr LATTER: Minister, you know that I am a strong advocate for giving schools the ability to meet the needs of their students and the community. To that end, I am going to go back to the issue of independent public schools, and I refer to page 3 of the SDS. Recognising that autonomy is not an end in itself, what innovation are we seeing in Queensland schools with the extra autonomy granted through IPSs?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question because it gives me a chance to advise the committee about more than the concept of independent public schools being a different branch or type of schooling. In education there are so many people with ideas and concepts, and these are things we need to work through carefully as opposed to anecdotal advice that says, 'You should just do this or do that.'

We have looked at work that has been done in other places, and Western Australia is a good example as it has had independent schools for the past four years. A significant study has just been released reporting on those particular schools. What I do not particularly appreciate is people saying, 'This is just not going to work,' as opposed to saying, 'I have a whole department made up of former teachers, principals and experts in the field as well as policy ideas of the government that speak about autonomy and the fact that we want to empower local communities.' This is acknowledged by the federal government as well which has a similar program. It is about ensuring we give people staffing flexibility. A great example is a school in the Wide Bay area which recently contacted me about an appointment where a person may not have had the skills to deal with the things that the school had identified were of concern for teaching and learning. As I am not a teacher, they are not the decisions that I am supposed to make but we need to ensure that we have staffing flexibility. Independent public schools provide some staffing flexibility. If the school knows that they really need a dedicated teacher in a particular language, in music, in literacy and numeracy or, dare I say it, in behaviour—so we are speaking about a complex range of things, not just the top end—we want to give principals the staffing flexibility. They have told me that they could appoint a teacher with those particular skills. They are the things they have been very appreciative of.

There is finance flexibility to improve the use of available resources. There is also curriculum implementation and services. A school in Cairns has a partnership with the local university, directing students or guiding students who may have a particular interest to go to James Cook University. I

mentioned the partnership with the Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy at Kirwan. Other things are effective teaching practices and parenting and community engagement. Most parents do not get involved in our schools. We want them to get involved in our schools. By having a school council made up of more and more parents or other people from the community, instead of the community seeing a school as something that has been there for a long time and they do not know what happens there because their kids either used to go there or they are not old enough to go there yet, we get more and more people from chambers of commerce involved in the school, giving them access to facilities and improving local partnerships with community and industry.

That means also looking at some of the things that we have provided as a department. When principals, teachers or administrative officers tell us that some of the things we are asking for are onerous, we need to ensure they have the independence—not that they are going to go out on their own—to give us that feedback. They currently do that through the regional office but sometimes it is too fragmented in the way that it comes back to us. That is why I do these principal forums. The government as a whole is saying that with independent public schools—the same as with state schools—we want to give those leaders in their communities the wherewithal and the resources to be able to do things more autonomously.

Dr Watterston: To build on the minister's comprehensive answer, in the time I have been in Queensland I have visited 16 schools and five of those have been IPS schools. What principals tell me is there is also a cultural change. The staff, community and stakeholders within that school environment understand that they now have the capacity to make decisions that they perhaps did not have control over in the past. So there has been a culture of innovation that has started to develop. There is still a way to go. There is a sense that ideas can come from the classroom and be developed within the school environment rather than being, as I said in my previous answer, cascaded down from the centre. That does require a different style of leadership. We are certainly working with those leaders at the moment to think about their own solutions and to be supported in creating those solutions. But there is no doubt that, in the short time IPS schools have been in place in this state, staff as well as the school leadership do feel empowered. Some of those solutions to problems that have been intractable for quite a long period of time have now started to be generated from the grassroots level. It happens on a number of different layers. As I said before, it is a business model that we can certainly encourage, but it does require different thinking and a 'doing whatever it takes' mentality. Not all principals are ready for that, but certainly we have had great modelling from those schools that are in place.

CHAIR: Minister, with reference to the highlights outlined on page 2 of the SDS, my question concerns the rollout of children and family centres under the National Partnership for Indigenous Early Childhood Development. Can the minister detail progress made in fulfilling Queensland commitment to the national partnership?

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, I thank you for the question. As I have already said today, we are committed to providing this quality education, training and employment for all Queensland children, but through our NAIDOC Week announcement we said that we should not just be speaking about schooling. Closing the Gap is more than just schooling. That is why we have said through Stronger Futures we should be looking at the early years as well. That is what the national partnership is about, through building these children and family centres, two of which the director-general and I have visited—Doomadgee and Mornington Island, which are very challenging communities. In these children and family centres we have a partnership with a private provider but, importantly, the providers are employing locals in these children and family centres. It was great to see the community coming in to utilise some of the services that are provided in not as formal arrangements.

A total of \$75 million is being invested in Queensland to establish these 10 family centres. It is a joint Queensland and Australian government commitment to bring together early childhood education and care, family support and child and maternal health services in one location. We have already spoken about the early years centres in other areas that I think the member for Burnett asked me about. These children and family centres help children from birth to eight years to help them with their development. In Indigenous schooling we have made—and it has been acknowledged by the former education minister, Peter Garrett—the greatest progress in terms of results for our over 50,000 Indigenous students. In fact, we will soon have the greatest number of Indigenous students. In their communities where these children and family centres are, we want to make sure we get them early because we need to focus on their health issues and other issues.

The locations are Cairns, Doomadgee, Ipswich, Logan, Mackay, Mareeba, Mornington Island, Mount Isa, Palm Island and Rockhampton. We are having continued active engagement with the community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, just as we did with our commitment to Closing the Gap post four-year strategy. We have now completed facilities at Doomadgee, Logan, Mareeba, Palm Island, Mornington Island and Rockhampton. They are permanent facilities. Permanent facilities will be completed in Mount Isa, Cairns and Ipswich shortly. There have been some significant gains in the work of CFCs across Queensland. A long-day-care centre has been established as part of the CFC. It is providing training in children services and employment opportunities for up to 17 local people. As I recall, it is managed by a local resident of Mornington Island. In Ipswich the CFC will be co-located on the Kambu Medical Centre site, providing integrated child health as well as access to early childhood education and care. The CFC is also working with the local kindergarten to identify and manage hearing problems early for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This national partnership agreement will expire on 30 June 2014.

Mr BOOTHMAN: My question relates to the highlights on page 2 of the SDS. Can the minister please provide an overview of the purpose and funding allocations for all kindergarten grants programs last year?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. For the committee's information, my department administered approximately \$190.7 million for the delivery of kindergarten programs and early years services for families with children from birth to eight years of age. The funding supported more than 1,800 programs and services across the state including \$153.5 million to establish, operate and support kindergarten programs including funds to approximately 467 kindergartens and 980 long-day-care services, and support for children with additional needs in kindergarten programs including disability support funding, specialised equipment and resources and transport options.

We invested \$39.6 million to establish an additional 33 new kindergarten services by the end of 2014, with 19 on state school sites and 14 located on other sites including non-state schools and existing long-day-care and kindergarten services. There is \$24 million under the Renovation And Refurbishment Grant Program to assist eligible kindergarten services to improve amenities and help meet the national quality standards. I am sure that local members would be aware of some of those renovation and refurbishment grant programs. Much like the maintenance programs in our schools, these kindergartens have a lot of wear and tear, and some of them are older. We have been pleased to provide these renovation and refurbishment grants.

We also have the Essential Upgrades Grant Program, with \$9 million to enhance eligible early childhood education and care facilities to support participation in kindergarten as well as the e-kindy program as we try to get to that 95 per cent participation rate. It is an online government approved kindergarten program delivered through distance education. For some of the most remote students, we have 165 children enrolled in semester 1, 2013 developed in Coorparoo at the Queensland School of Distance Education. I have seen that in action. Those parents, especially from the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, are very thankful for that.

We have also had \$19 million to support early years services for families and their children in rural, remote and high-growth communities and \$18.1 million for those 10 children and family centres that I mentioned before. You can see there is significant acknowledgement about the importance of the early years. We will continue to do that but we need to have the support of the federal government to do that in an area that was traditionally not an area of state government responsibility.

Mr BENNETT: I refer to page 4 of the SDS regarding school infrastructure. Can the minister please explain the works of the Schools Planning Commission in terms of how the government is approaching asset management?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. We want to make sure we have a coordinated approach for planning for the future needs of all Queensland schools. That is why in 2012 we established a Schools Planning Commission, which includes the three schooling sectors, key government agencies and local government. It has been chaired by former education minister Bob Quinn. It met for the first time in August 2012. It is to advise the government on matters relating to strategic planning for school infrastructure in Queensland. It is analysing current planning, regulatory and financial systems for school planning and development, and providing recommendations on how to increase their efficiency and cut red tape. It has produced two significant pieces of work—an analysis of future population trends, current school provision and a resultant

Queensland schools infrastructure demand map, and an analysis of current school planning, regulatory and financial regimes and identification of two key areas that will assist to increase efficiencies in school planning development and capital allocation and to reduce red tape.

The focus of the commission has been to implement a pilot demand map process for future schooling provision in three geographic areas—Brisbane metro north, Caloundra and Townsville. Further recommendations will also be made for the remaining high-growth areas of Queensland. So we are going to keep working with schools and their communities to identify and meet long-term enrolment projections over a 20-year period and have a 20-year rolling program for new schools that is updated annually and includes infrastructure provision for state schools, state high schools and special schools.

The Leader of the Opposition asked about some of the detail. The Leader of the Opposition was referring to a map that looked at the whole of the state. That looks at the state at an SA3 level. It is a form of the map we are describing which is roughly at the level of a local government. The beauty of the Schools Planning Commission is that it drills down further—to an SA2 level or, basically, suburbs. While we assess that there will be marginal growth of one to two per cent in the Toowoomba region—that was the detail that the honourable member tabled—we do not yet know where that growth could be within the Toowoomba area.

I just want to demonstrate the difference. If we use the same analysis in Townsville, we see the growth rate of one to two per cent across the city. But the maps that we released today go down to the next level. The maps we have released show that the growth is in the very north—if you go to those northern parts of Townsville, where I was yesterday, you will see where these greenfield land developments are—and in the very south. I say to the honourable member for Burdekin that in the first 10 years the growth is in the north but in the second decade of our planning the subsequent growth is in the south—in those areas that you and I have discussed before. It is important that we do not pick and choose our statistics. That is the point I was trying to make.

I also refer to the area of Brisbane north. The honourable member has pulled out one SA2 where there is growth but has ignored the surrounding suburbs where there will be declining school-age student numbers. Indeed, the report states that for the suburbs north of the Brisbane River but south of the North Pine River, which includes the inner city, there will be a contraction in primary students of 1,331 in the first decade and 1,189 in the second decade. Compare that to just north of the river, where there is an explosion with about 5,000 new primary students in the North Lakes, Mango Hill and Murrumba Downs area over the next 20 years.

I hope that clarifies things for the committee in terms of the size of our maps. We get down to micro level. Yes, there can be an interpretation that growth is going to continue—as we know, the whole state is growing—but particular parts of cities will not grow the same. We need to factor in local schools that are there, the need for new schools in the areas where there is massive growth and the fact that we have people moving around as time goes on.

Mrs SCOTT: My question is to the director-general. In what part of the curriculum is the Queensland Plan being taught in schools, as is referred to on page 4 of the SDS?

Dr Watterston: Thank you for the question. As you will appreciate, the Queensland Plan is an opportunity for residents of Queensland to get involved in the creation of a vision over 30 years that is unprecedented in anywhere I have ever worked. Offering that opportunity to school students I think is fundamentally important as they will become tomorrow's leaders and adults. To have that as part of the school curriculum is certainly incredibly important. I am just waiting for the specifics, because the curriculum titles here are slightly different from the previous jurisdiction I was in, but it would certainly be part of the social science area. Specifically in terms of the time allocated and the opportunity for students to participate in the work sheets that have been created, which I would imagine are apolitical—I do not imagine; they are apolitical and certainly bring people up to speed in giving students the opportunity to recognise—

Mrs SCOTT: Would you like to take that on notice and provide us with the work sheets?

Dr Watterston: I will certainly take it on notice and get the answer to you. It will certainly be within the social science area.

CHAIR: I remind the director-general that it will be up to the minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Certainly. I am happy to take that on notice. I say to the honourable member that, as has been made very clear, it is a crowded curriculum. It is not compulsory. These are things that teachers can decide to do. In terms of the content or where it is in the curriculum, we are happy to provide that on notice.

Mrs SCOTT: Thank you. Minister, page 81 of the Budget Strategy and Outlook shows an increase of only 398 FTEs, but the SDS Highlights on page 3 includes allocating 724 teachers and teacher aides in response to enrolment growth. Can you account for the 326 FTE shortfall?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am afraid I cannot accept the assertion that there is a shortfall, per se. There is a difference, obviously, between those two numbers. I do not have those numbers sitting in front of me.

Mrs SCOTT: Would you like to take that on notice?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to provide the detail on why there is a difference between those two numbers but, importantly, also advise the committee that we do have an increase in teachers in our schools. Contrary to some of the assertions made over the last year about a reduction in the number of teachers, that is not the case. We had an increase in teachers last year. But we did ask some teachers to go back to the front line. Resource teachers in high schools and the year 2 net were positions that led to us making sure that if there was a reduction at all it was in back-of-house, to make sure that we supported our teachers on the front line. As I say, I am happy to get the detail specifically and come back to you about the difference.

Mrs SCOTT: Minister, in answer to question on notice No. 385 regarding weekend detention for students you state that resources and processes are already in place to support schools to make local decisions about dealing with disciplinary issues. Can you advise how many weekend detentions have occurred?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course, none has occurred because we have not yet put the legislation through the House.

CHAIR: I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Good afternoon, Minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Hello. Welcome.

Ms TRAD: Thank you. Minister, I refer to the transition of year 7 into high school, SDS reference page 2. One of the proposals that you progressed to deal with the accommodation of year 7 into Brisbane State High, and to also address capacity issues, was to consult on a merger, which was the government's preferred option, with Coorparoo Secondary College. Minister, did you approve the progress of this merger with Coorparoo Secondary College by signing a briefing note or authorising an authority to proceed?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am sorry, Madam Chair. I am not quite sure—

Ms TRAD: I am just wondering: what was the mechanism for starting the consultation process on the proposed merger?

Mr LANGBROEK: Sure. Okay.

Ms TRAD: How did you authorise it?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course, we did not come to government last year and come up with an idea out of the blue about what we might do at Coorparoo Secondary College and Brisbane State High. There has been a significant issue at Brisbane State High about growth and the size of the school. The planning, as the honourable member has asked about, was all about planning for the future—making sure we allowed for its potential growth. We looked at the five options that were there. The first was to expand on the current campus, which is quite difficult because it is constrained in terms of size. The second was to find some other land and build a new campus. Interestingly enough, this is something I inherited from the former government but the former government did not actually action. They had three potential merger options: to merge with Coorparoo, to merge with Balmoral or to merge with Yeronga.

We also then looked at the viability of Coorparoo through the viability assessment that was conducted by the department under my guidance—about those other aspects of enrolment patterns et cetera. But Coorparoo being the neighbouring school to Brisbane State High, there were particular issues about those particular options. I discussed with the department the potential to explore the solution. We looked at this potential for amalgamating the two schools. But we wanted both parties to be willing participants. We realised and found out through our consultation that the conditions did not appear to be present and I decided that we should not proceed with the amalgamation.

In terms of the specific details, I am happy to provide for you however it was that we did it, but it was basically departmental advice that had been given to, as I understand it, previous ministers. There were some problems with regard to catchment. If we potentially considered it with Yeronga,

there was an issue about it being further away than Coorparoo. That was also the case for the Balmoral catchment area. In terms of the detail, it was just a case of us looking at our assets and asking, 'How can we potentially do it more efficiently?'

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Minister. Can I confirm that you are happy to table the briefing notes or any of the documentation—

Mr LANGBROEK: No, no. I am happy to provide you the details of how I progressed the discussion that was given to me from the department about the recommendation for us to look at the matter.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Minister. You have talked about discussing with the department, looking at the options and then discussing the potential to amalgamate. I am wondering whether the department did any modelling, provided any data or gave you a brief to detail how an amalgamation would look and whether you agreed, through signing that brief, to proceed to consult on the merger.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Let me provide some more detail, then, about the options, because that basically is the information I was provided with. So expanding on the current site was the most straightforward option, but it was really a compromise because there is not much land and the school can only really grow upwards, which is serviceable but not ideal. Buying new land and building a new campus was out of the question, not least because of the financial position we had been left in by the previous government. That left us with three. Balmoral has a catchment area between it and Brisbane State High, so that poses big issues, and Yeronga was further away than from Coorparoo. So the government assessed that the best outcome—not necessarily the easiest—would be to accommodate growth by merging with the adjacent Coorparoo campus.

The other fact that came into play was, independent of everything I have just mentioned: the enrolment numbers at Coorparoo, including those coming from the catchment, meant that the school was one of the three urban high schools that were assessed on raw data as nonviable. Specifically, only 99 students out of 386 school students that live in the catchment attended. This means that three out of every four state school students in the catchment were driving past Coorparoo to go to other schools. The gross student numbers were low, at 337, and the incoming cohort of year 8s was below the threshold of 60. The capacity of the school is 761, so the utilisation rate was below the threshold of 50 per cent. To give you an indication of the decline, there were 337 year 8 enrolments this year; six years ago there were 659. It has effectively halved. However, instead of closing the school we sought to solve both issues with the merger solution.

We explained, for all of the reasons outlined, why we thought this was the best solution. To be honest, the feedback on the ground from the feeder primary schools was ecstatic—that their children would have the opportunity to go to Brisbane State High School. But the key determining factor was the reaction of both of the parties to the potential merger. There was strong opposition to the merger on both sides. We were not going to force two unwilling partners into a merger because, whether it is in business or in education, it simply will not work.

I add at this point that, while there was strong opposition, these groups were not necessarily given the chance to consider the proposal in a calm, rational way because of the significant campaign that we saw. In the standard way, we saw the honourable member having a compromised outcome as long as they could whip up some fear in their local communities—building up straw-man arguments and then knocking them down. I think we deserve better than that.

Importantly, we showed through the decision of last week that, unlike the former government, who would make decisions and say, 'We did not tell you about it before the election but we are going to stick with it anyway,' we will go back to option 1, which is building on the site. It is not our favoured option and it is not the ideal one, but we have listened to the community. We recognise that this is what they want. It is important, because if we do not accommodate growth the direct-entry component of Brisbane State High will diminish and vanish. I note that the honourable member for South Brisbane has announced to the world that she would like to see Brisbane State High become West End High, that she does not want to grow the academic program and she does not believe there should be direct entry.

Ms TRAD: Point of order, Madam Chair. I have not said that. That is a misrepresentation of what I actually said. I would like the minister to withdraw that, please, Madam Chair.

Mr LANGBROEK: I withdraw.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr LANGBROEK: I hope that answers the question for the honourable member.

Ms TRAD: Just one final question, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Time has expired. It is now 12.30. The session has drawn to a close, I am sorry, member for South Brisbane. We will now be adjourning for 30 minutes, until one o'clock. When the hearing resumes we will examine the estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Training and Employment in respect of training and employment. Thank you, members of the committee, and thank you sincerely, Minister.

Proceedings suspended from 12.30 pm to 1.01 pm

CHAIR: This hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee is resumed. We will now examine the organisational areas of training and employment. I welcome Ms Jodi Schmidt, who is the chief executive officer of TAFE Queensland, who, under schedule 7 of the standing orders, may, along with the director-general, be asked questions directly by the committee.

Minister, I note the absence of the Skills Queensland CEO. Would you clarify that questions on Skills Queensland will go to you?

Mr LANGBROEK: Certainly. May I address a couple of other issues that were raised on notice before?

CHAIR: Yes, please do.

Mr LANGBROEK: In relation to the matter that I took on notice from the member about the amalgamation of Brisbane State High and Coorparoo Secondary College, I wish to advise the committee that there are no briefing notes in relation to a possible merger of Brisbane State High and Coorparoo Secondary College.

In terms of the five possible options that I mentioned before, I can confirm that a briefing note was prepared for the previous minister. That briefing note was referenced in the *Courier-Mail*, and subsequently this matter was raised with me upon coming to government, as I explained in the answer that I gave to the committee. At that point I considered the options and assessed that there were the five that I mentioned before. Of course I cannot provide a briefing note that was given to a previous minister, but this addresses the member's concerns.

In relation to the question that was asked about early childhood education and care, a query about the \$97 million disparity between the budget and estimate budget, this relates to state government funding which was deferred to deliver 33 nongovernment kindy services and the deferral and rephasing of Commonwealth funding. I must point out that due to some uncertainty at the time of budget preparation relating to future national partnership funding, which I also referred to in my answer, this rephasing has ensured that we can continue to fund services into 2014. We obviously need to have this reassurance from Canberra, and we would look forward to Labor members opposite, in conjunction with their federal colleagues, providing that certainty in relation to the national partnership.

Before I turn to the director-general, who I know also wants to clarify an issue; I note that you just referred to the fact that the committee can ask questions of the chief executive officer of a statutory body. In relation to Skills Queensland, and following the decision outlined in our VET action plan Great skills. Real opportunities, in order to create a ministerial industry commission it was decided that Skills Queensland would need to be abolished. Advice on the decision to abolish Skills Queensland was forwarded to the chair and CEO of Skills Queensland on 11 June 2013. The board of Skills Queensland is still in place and will be until such time as legislative amendments to the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act are made. The CEO of Skills Queensland ceased employment on 21 June 2013. I am advised that the chair of the Skills Queensland board made a decision not to replace the CEO during this period of transition and winding down. Instead the general manager, performance and investment, Skills Queensland, was delegated—in addition to his regular role—the responsibilities normally undertaken by the CEO, and he is working closely with the chair. Given the unique circumstances and the timing of this hearing, I ask that the committee direct questions in relation to Skills Queensland to me.

Dr Watterston: I believe that the member for Woodridge asked me specifically where in the curriculum were the proposed lesson plans around the 30-year Queensland plan. I did answer social science at the time, which was correct, but more specifically in terms of a subelement it is the study of society and environment. I just wanted to clarify that issue.

CHAIR: Thank you, Dr Watterston. Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS under key highlights. Could you please describe for the committee the rationale for the newly announced \$47 million community learning program?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank you for that question. It is a new initiative under Great skills. Real opportunities, and it is providing support to disadvantaged learners to participate in and complete accredited training up to certificate III. It complements the introduction of the certificate III guarantee, which gives Queenslanders access to a government subsidised training place up to and including their first certificate III level qualification in priority training areas. It is designed to fill a gap in the skills and training market by providing support and assistance to disadvantaged learners who are not accessing Australian government income support or employment services to undertake nationally recognised training.

Importantly for the committee's information, community learning is not an employment assistance program. It is a skilling program for those people who need to gain skills and qualifications within a supported environment. In simple terms, community learning helps those who are either ineligible for Australian government employment assistance, or unable to easily take advantage of the certificate III guarantee. Unlike the previous Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative that allowed people who were eligible for employment services provided by the Australian government to participate, community learning restricts participant eligibility and will only assist those people who need Queensland government skilling assistance. The Queensland government believes that the focus on training for skills for jobs is the way forward for the Queensland economy. This is distinct from Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which offered employment services, provided job preparation assistance and work placements, all of which sit within the realms of the Australian government's responsibility.

This program focused on undertaking and completing accredited training. By restricting eligibility and focusing on the attainment of a certificate III qualification, this differentiates community learning from the previous Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative and ensures that it does not duplicate any Australian government employee assistance. It will provide \$47 million over five years to provide additional support for people with diverse needs to gain a qualification. People face barriers to accessing, effectively participating in and successfully completing accredited training due to individual environmental and/or systemic factors. By addressing this gap in the training market, we are ensuring that the delivery of training is accessible to more individuals. Through this program and the ambitious reforms announced as part of Great skills. Real opportunities, we are aligning the training sector more closely with employment outcomes.

The mainstream training system often does not address key issues which disadvantaged learners face. Registered training organisations and community based organisations will be funded to deliver nationally recognised training in a less formal community setting, which will offer disadvantaged learners a different avenue to attain skills and qualifications, particularly for individuals who have previously had negative experiences in institutional settings.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, I refer to page 16 of the SDS, 'Service Area: Training, Tertiary Education and Employment'. How is the government reducing red tape and other barriers to attract new apprentices?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course this is a significant area of concern in the construction industry, which has experienced a prolonged downturn. The government has committed \$86 million to deliver 10,000 additional apprenticeships as part of our plan to grow a four-pillar economy and reduce unemployment in Queensland to four per cent over the next six years. We are reforming and revamping the skills and training sector to increase completion rates, including red tape reduction strategies, and streamlining apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements. We are streamlining the administration of the Vocational Education, and Employment Act 2000. It will also allow for operational efficiencies and better alignment of key areas of the apprenticeship and traineeship system across all Australian states and territories.

Can I advise the committee that one of the federal ministers with whom I have had ministerial council meetings—admittedly, it was three ministers ago—was Senator Chris Evans, former minister for tertiary education, skills, jobs and workplace relations. He has acknowledged at ministerial council meetings that the current model of apprenticeships is one that is not suitable with its very rigid format for getting people into trades: the four-year model with block training release. That is why we have committed to saying that we need to look at different ways of implementing these apprenticeships. We could start with 10,000 apprenticeships, but because we have a major issue regarding the dropout rate, half of them would not complete the requirements within the first year. That would mean that we are not actually improving outcomes at the other end.

We have legislative changes to the act proposed for completion by July 2014, which is of course subject to parliamentary approval. We have complexities of experience by employers, apprentices and trainees who operate across multiple jurisdictions. That will be reduced, and it will

allow for apprentices to move more freely from one employer to another without the need to cancel their training contract—as happens at the moment—and we also want to remove or amend outdated provisions. We want to expand the current arrangements. We are proposing to suspend the training contract in certain circumstances so that we do not just cancel the training contract. That would allow an apprentice in some circumstances to take time off—they cannot currently do that—such as a gap year. We know that young Gen Y kids want to do things like that. Then they can return to the training contract without the need for a cancellation and recommencement. Increased flexibility within the apprenticeship system will bring some of the attributes which currently exist in universities to the vocational education and training sector to make it more attractive to new entrants and employers.

Mr BENNETT: With reference to the key highlights on page 4 of the SDS, can the minister please outline to the committee what priorities will be funded under the new investment framework.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. It is a significant question, because the government had the task force on skills reform. Something that very clearly came out of that task force was the need to have genuine partnerships with industry, who are saying that if we want workers in our particular industries, we need to make sure that they are being trained as we need them to be trained. We need to give industry and employers a direct line of sight as to how we are providing training. We need to ensure that it is balanced so that Queenslanders can access and complete the skills training required to procure jobs, contribute to our economy and their own prosperity. We have established a ministerial industry commission, which is what I referred to in my opening clarification about Skills Queensland. It is doing the job that Skills Queensland was supposed to do, but there have been significant question marks about whether it was doing it as efficiently as it may have. That is no reflection on the individuals involved. By having that brought back into the department—as has been done in Western Australian very successfully and is now being done, as I understand it, in Victoria and Tasmania—we get direct advice to government through a department that is more nimble and is being chaired by the Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education. The honourable member for Mount Coot-tha is going to chair that ministerial industry commission, which will advise government about the priorities for funding qualifications that match training with job opportunities. Industry will be represented on the ministerial industry commission; the assistant minister chairs it with input from a number of other people from within industry who have a work plan. That is worked out via a small group of people who are doing the research work that Skills Queensland used to do. They say, 'Here are the areas that we think we need to focus on. If a new requirement comes up, we can provide those jobs in those particular areas'.

Over the last few years a classic example is coal seam gas in that that is an industry which has arisen quite quickly. We have to ensure that our training providers are providing that training, and up to now it has not been as nimble. In 2013-14 the VET investment framework underpins Great skills. Real opportunities and it will deliver investment in training programs valued at \$440 million. It will provide for investments in four key areas: the certificate III guarantee, which is something I spoke about in the previous answer; the entitlement of every Queenslander to their first government subsidised certificate III qualification in priority courses; industry partnerships and strategies addressing the needs of industry identified in emerging policy agendas; and whole-of-government strategic responses, including selected certificate IV qualifications, selected priority certificate III qualifications, economic hot spots to support place based strategies and skill sets, higher level training, investment in higher level qualifications at diploma and advanced diploma level where they are required by industry and the economy, and strategic intervention initiatives and flexible strategic place and industry based funding to address specific emergent priorities. A wide range of priority qualifications are covered under the framework including qualifications in aged care, disability, children's services, manufacturing technology, engineering and commercial cookery.

Mr SYMES: My question is to the minister. With reference to the highlights outlined on page 4 of the SDS, can the minister please outline what current investment has been made with the \$86 million over six years as part of the Pathways to a Skilled Trade Future initiative?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This now gives more detail to the principles that I espoused about why we need to do something about changing how apprenticeships are actually carried out and then shows that we are actually not just doing that work as part of reforming apprenticeships but we are spending real dollars as part of that election commitment to actually make sure that we get those outcomes as well as making the legislative change. We have committed up to \$86 million to deliver 10,000 additional apprenticeships, and the breakdown of the funding commitment is as follows: \$8 million committed in 2014-15, \$16.4 million in 2015-16 and of course, once we have made those other changes, up to \$61.6 million over the

remaining years. The initiatives currently underway are detailed in the government's five-year action plan, Great skills. Real opportunities, and the initiatives include the \$10 million School to Trade Pathway to encourage employers to transition school based apprentices to full-time work after they leave school and a Group Training Additional Apprentice Bonus that will provide up to \$3 million to create additional apprenticeship opportunities to meet future skills needs.

A review of the building and construction structured training policy—the 10 per cent training policy—is also underway to support additional apprenticeship commencements and outcomes in the construction industry. My department has also realigned and prioritised user-choice funding—user choice is the apprenticeship form of training dollars—to the areas of greatest need based on skills shortages, reviewed the mix of apprenticeship and traineeship pathways to ensure they align with nationally recognised outcomes and that they address skills shortage challenges, aligned the joint group training program funding priorities to target apprenticeship commencements, and refocused regional activity to maximise the uptake of additional apprenticeship opportunities. So the committee can see that we are doing many things because we want to make sure those 10,000 apprenticeships lead to 10,000 jobs.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That does draw to a close government questions. I now call on and welcome the member for Mackay.

Mr LANGBROEK: Welcome.

Mr MULHERIN: It is good to be here. Minister, I seek leave to table for the benefit of the committee the Queensland Treasury document that shows that jobs growth in Queensland under the first full financial year of the LNP government is the weakest in more than two decades. The result for Queenslanders is the worst since 1990-91 when Australia was last in recession. Minister, considering that you still call yourself the Minister for Employment after having axed employment programs in this state, do you take responsibility for this shocking result?

CHAIR: Member for Mackay, you have sought leave to table—

Mr MULHERIN: I seek leave.

CHAIR: Just one moment.

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, I would also like some clarification. I am the Minister for Employment and I am happy to speak to the details of what my Employment portfolio covers, but this seems to me like it is a question that should have been asked of the Treasurer last week, because unemployment statistics are covered by Treasury.

Mr MULHERIN: Madam Chair, with all due respect, on page 1 of the SDS under the portfolio overview it refers to ministerial responsibilities and portfolio responsibilities relating to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. If you go to page 2 it talks about giving Queenslanders the skills to maximise their opportunities for employment. Once again, the start of the SDS at page 2 refers to the Department of Education, Training and Employment. These relate to employment figures.

CHAIR: Member for Mackay, leave has been granted to table your document.

Mr LANGBROEK: Again, I am happy to take the question. There is no doubt that my department is absolutely determined to make sure we contribute to our four per cent unemployment rate target. But it is also important to—

Mr MULHERIN: So you do not take any responsibility, or should you axe the word 'employment' from your title?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the statement there.

Mr MULHERIN: That is what Santo Santoro did.

Mr LANGBROEK: Actually, it is an unabashed focus of my department to acknowledge the importance of education and training leading to real jobs.

Mr MULHERIN: But you do not take responsibility?

Mr LANGBROEK: What I do acknowledge is that we have inherited a very difficult set of circumstances but, as I have mentioned in some of my answers to other members of the committee previously, some of the roles that were being carried out by my department in the Employment section of my department were ones that were the responsibility of the Australian government. We have a very important function within my department in the Employment section and what we are doing is we are looking to have more participation and achievement in vocational education and training—

Mr MULHERIN: With all due respect, Minister, you have flicked it saying that it is a responsibility for the Commonwealth but you are also saying that employment is part of your portfolio responsibilities. You cannot have it both ways—that is, when the numbers go north you are responsible if there is a turnaround—and it is the government's policy to bring employment down to four per cent—and when it goes south you do not take any responsibility. If it goes north it is okay.

Mr LANGBROEK: I will take that as a comment, but here is something that I absolutely warrant to the honourable member: when unemployment goes down, as I am confident it is going to—

Mr MULHERIN: You will take credit.

Mr LANGBROEK:—I will be happy to say that my department, through some of the actions that we put in place, which I am happy to outline for you here today, are ones that helped to contribute as part of a whole-of-government initiative as part of a department absolutely focused on getting to that four per cent unemployment rate within six years. But it will be the Treasurer who will be presenting those statistics and answering about them every month. But I am happy to keep going along this vein, Madam Chair, and I am happy to take the honourable member's observations but say that we do work very hard in the Employment section of my department. When it comes to the real statistics, they are the ones that the Treasurer deals with every month and I am acutely aware of them and I have them all here.

Mr MULHERIN: So this government will only take credit when the unemployment rate falls; when it rises it is the Commonwealth's responsibility.

CHAIR: Order! Member for Mackay, I do believe that they are imputations that you are putting there and I would suggest you move to your next question.

Mr MULHERIN: I will move on. Minister, according to the latest update by Queensland Treasury Corporation—and I seek leave to table the weekly market and economic review dated 15 July—the number of people recorded as unemployed in Queensland has risen to 709,300 people, a 15-year high. Minister, what are you doing about this and do you accept that axing of employment programs under your government has been a terrible mistake?

Mr LANGBROEK: This is the same question. It is the same sort of question, just couched in different terms when it is a statistic that the Treasurer deals with. Just having the word 'employment' in the SDS does not mean that you can refer to employment and then say, 'Now, I want to speak about unemployment.'

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Leave is granted to table the weekly market and economic review. Thank you, member for Mackay.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, ABS statistics show that there were 14,500 fewer full-time jobs in June than in March 2012 in trend terms and 13,700 fewer full-time jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis—that is, Minister, fewer full-time jobs in this state than when your government was elected. The unemployment rate is now 6.4 per cent—the highest in a decade since October 2013. As the Minister for Employment, do you have any plans to address your government's monumental failure to support jobs and do you accept axing Skilling Queenslanders for Work was a costly mistake?

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, once again I seek your guidance about the preamble—the lengthy preamble—which had numerous observations and comments about unemployment statistics, none of which have reference to the SDS. So if the honourable member wishes to prosecute issues to do with Skilling Queenslanders for Work—

Mr MULHERIN: I refer to the SDS at page—

Mr LANGBROEK: No. Just saying that the word 'employment' is there and therefore now we can talk about particular unemployment statistics—

Mr MULHERIN: Well, opportunities for employment. It is right through the SDS, Madam Chair.

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, I know, but—

CHAIR: Excuse me, member for Mackay. Yes, Minister?

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, if there is a specific question and it is about Skilling Queenslanders for Work, then I am happy to take it and I invite the honourable member to rephrase it if he wants to ask me about Skilling Queenslanders for Work and what my department is doing. If he needs guidance from me to write his questions, I am happy to write his questions.

Mr MULHERIN: No.

CHAIR: I call on the member for Mackay.

Mr MULHERIN: I am asking the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Minister, unemployment is now 6.4 per cent. Minister, do you accept axing Skilling Queenslanders for Work—

CHAIR: Member for Mackay!

Mr MULHERIN: He asked me to rephrase it, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Okay.

Mr MULHERIN: Do you accept axing Skilling Queenslanders for Work was a costly mistake that has sent unemployment to a decade high?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I certainly reject any assertion that Skilling Queenslanders for Work itself is responsible for the program not being continued by us. It is nothing other than an indictment on the Australian government for whom the responsibility is to do the job that Skilling Queenslanders for Work was doing. I have already outlined in my answers earlier this afternoon to other members of the committee that we are committed to helping disadvantaged people and we are committed to helping everyone get a certificate III guarantee, but not in the form that was having people learn skills that would enable them to potentially get a job as opposed to training them to get a real job. That was the difference between some of those programs from last year that I know were very difficult, and this morning we had the opposition leader prosecuting arguments of last year. But as a government I can tell the honourable member that we are refocusing training on how to get real jobs and making sure that we improve an individual's employment prospects, and social inclusion of course remains a priority for the Queensland government. That is why we have said we will have \$47 million over five years for disadvantaged learners.

We are making sure that in my department we design strategies to see an increase in participation and achievement in VET for those disadvantaged learners and that we lobby the Australian government for more effective employment service delivery for disadvantaged clients and influence the federal employment agenda—and I invite the honourable member to assist us with that—as we did last year when we saw the benefits of many of those programs to which he has referred. We have also formed an interagency group on employment and training with membership comprising senior state and Australian government representatives that is looking at issues like workforce participation, improving educational training and productivity outcomes, and focusing again on those who are disadvantaged in the labour market, many of whom were dealt with by those programs to which you mentioned. But as to whether those particular individuals—the quantum of those—is what has led to the statistics that he referred to, they are not matters that, firstly, I accept or that, secondly, are appropriate in this committee.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I would now call on the member for Woodridge.

Mrs SCOTT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, with reference to page 4 of the SDS which refers to the government response to the Queensland Skills and Training Task Force, what cashable savings are expected to be realised by the government through the proposed productivity gains inherent in the departmental offer to educational employees of TAFE?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question, and this is something that is quite obvious in terms of the direction for TAFE that was identified in the task force—that was, that TAFE, which has a great brand and passionate people who are part of it, was basically slowly withering on the vine because of an outdated industrial arrangement as well as infrastructure that was tired. That is no reflection on, as I say, the people involved, but wherever we go around the state it has very low utilisation.

As part of the task force we said we have to fix the infrastructure, we have to separate the purchaser from the provider—so in other words the department was outsourcing. There is the new CEO, Jodi Schmidt, and we are in the process of setting up a new commercially focused board for TAFE. Then, of course, we had to deal with their assets and their infrastructure. The third aspect is that to which you are referring, which is the enterprise bargaining. We need to make sure that we do not regard it as a government funded monopoly which was set up just to provide vocational education and training. It is now in a contestable market and that means that all of the people who are within it have to be able to compete and that includes looking at the industrial arrangements for the people who are working there. It now has to do so on a level footing with other registered training organisations. It is in that context that I answer the question, not in relation to the savings made, but in terms of the improved efficiencies that are available. It is not about saving money, it is about getting the best possible outcomes for TAFE students by getting the best possible value for money for every dollar spent in providing vocational education and training to Queenslanders.

In other words, it is about giving the customer, the student, what they want, which up to now has not been necessarily exactly what TAFE was always doing. Again it is no reflection on the people, but because it was part of a bigger amorphous system that took a long time to adjust to certain things, like a particular course that might be needed in an area, or whether employers wanted to release apprentices for block release, TAFE would say, 'Well, I'm sorry, we don't offer a course in drilling for coal seam gas and it will take some time for us to develop it.' Similarly, for block release for training employers would say, 'Well, we need someone who can go to night school.' TAFEs were under-utilised and are under-utilised with five per cent in what we used to consider TAFE to be good at and that was doing night school. What we have asked, through the task force, is to look at all of those areas. It is not about cashable savings, it is about making sure that we have efficiencies within the industrial arrangement so that we can get better outcomes for the students who are studying in better facilities with better courses that will lead them to real jobs.

Mrs SCOTT: But, Minister, surely with the focus of the government on savings there has been a predictable savings figure?

Mr LANGBROEK: Well, all those figures are outlined in the budget papers, but part of the savings, or the diminution you will see of funding, has actually come through the federal government and the ending of the Productivity Places Program, which I think cost us about \$50 million this year, and then a deferring of the signing off, this is by the four training ministers that I have had to deal with over the last couple of months, starting with Chris Evans, to Chris Bowen to Craig Emerson and to—and I haven't yet met him, but I think it is Brendan O'Connor—I am advised it is Kim Carr. They have refused up to now to sign off on our implementation plan for the national partnership, which the Premier signed in April last year. With the implementation plan we were at great pains to make sure that everything we were going to do would not contravene any aspects of the national partnership. Finally the national partnership has been agreed to which means that the federal government understands, just as all other jurisdictions are looking at training at the moment, that training needs to be reinvigorated, not just here but in every other state. There is no way the federal government would have signed off on anything that was going to mean that it did not pass the test of the national partnership, but even so they still delayed on signing off on the implementation plan. So any reductions that you are seeing to which you may be referring may partly be because of the Productivity Places Program being ceased and the delay in funding that came through from the federal government delaying on signing off on the implementation plan.

Mrs SCOTT: The final report of the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce recommended that significant additional funding be provided to TAFE to support the transition to competitive entry into the training market. Why has this recommendation been ignored?

Mr LANGBROEK: Well, Madam Chair, as I understand it, all the recommendations were accepted in principle. I am happy to get the detail. In terms of the theme of the question as opposed to your assertion that we have ignored it, we have said very clearly that we want to make sure that we support TAFE, that we support TAFE in a potentially more contestable market and, in fact, I can advise that the VET investment framework provides a further \$167.5 million in 2013-14 to support the transition to a more contestable training market. So, this is a very important message that I have said to TAFEs around the state and to people who are training and studying in them: we want more people studying in our TAFEs but we have to deal with the infrastructure they were dealt with, the fact that they have an outdated industrial arrangement and, of course, the contestable market where more and more people are choosing to go elsewhere. We had a 40 per cent utilisation rate. But I might ask the new CEO of TAFE Queensland, who was the former deputy director-general, just to refer to that particular part of the task force that you mentioned because I don't necessarily think that that was a specific recommendation. It may have just been a line. But I am confident we are supporting with increased funding.

Ms Schmidt: To expand on the minister's answer, the task force did recommend transparent funding to support TAFE Queensland in its transition, acknowledging that merging into a competitive marketplace would have some pressures. As the minister just relayed, that funding has been agreed to within the funding arrangements in the SDS and that is provided to TAFE as it moves through the reform process which, of course, will see it competing head-on in the competitive marketplace with private training providers and is to support that process over the coming years as outlined in the task force report.

Mrs SCOTT: Just one more question, Minister. It is noted that TAFE assets and facilities will be transferred to an independent body. What is the nature of this body—is it a government department, statutory authority or commercial operation—and what is the cost to the government of establishing the new body which is proposed to run TAFE facilities?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. That is something for the committee's information, of course, that is an important part of the Skills and Training Taskforce. Of the three issues we need to look at, the assets were also a significant issue and I know there is a lot of angst and concern about what is going to happen to those assets. We are making sure that we do that within government. That is going to happen via interagency—our agency is working with Treasury on the model. It is not going to be an independent asset disposal agency out in the commercial world, because the particular body has to have consideration about not just value per se, but has to balance the needs of rural and regional Queensland and where we are going to provide training where there may not be training.

We have another executive who has been seconded from Treasury, Drew, who I might get to give some more detail here. It is a good question. I want to make sure that Queenslanders are assured that it is not just a case of us saying this is a commercial entity. It is one with an eye on the commerciality but not purely a commercial real estate agent saying, 'I've got a bunch of TAFEs to sell,' and on that I will ask Drew to report.

Mr Ellem: If I could elaborate on the minister's response, as the minister mentioned, I have been seconded over from Treasury for 12 months to work with the department on a range of skills reform issues, including this one. The question that you put about what type of entity will ultimately hold and manage these assets, that is yet to be determined. As the minister mentioned, the department is working with Treasury closely, particularly through Projects Queensland, an entity within Queensland Treasury and Trade. Those issues will be determined through a business case process. As I say, there has been no decision made as to the type of entity that will be holding those assets at this point.

Mrs SCOTT: Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you. I will now call on the member for Waterford?

Mr LATTER: Minister, with reference to the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform, can the minister detail progress made in fulfilling Queensland's commitments of the national partnership?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course, this has been the subject of much debate over the last almost year and a half because we have approximately \$1.75 billion flowing to Queensland over a five-year period through this national partnership. We have created the blueprint, which is called Great skills, Real opportunities, to reform Queensland's VET sector to support Queenslanders to access and complete the skills training they need to get a job. We also want to make sure that we as a government maximise our investment in skills and training so we get the best benefits for the state's economy and the prosperity of individuals.

On 1 July 2013 \$42 million was opened up to contestable funding under the certificate III guarantee. That means that every Queenslanders has an opportunity to achieve their first certificate III qualification. By 2014 the Queensland government would have achieved the full implementation of a contestable training market, ensuring that government is providing the public with the best training and skilling solution at the best possible price. We are also making sure that our public providers, and that is what the honourable member for Woodridge was asking about before, are competitive, responsive, innovative and flexible and that is why they have been established as an independent statutory authority overseen by a commercially focused board from 1 July 2013.

We also continue to work through COAG, the Council of Australian Governments, and the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment, SCOTese, to create a more transparent VET system. A number of key agreements have been reached regarding reporting of VET activity, introducing a unique student identifier and implementing the national My Skills website. These are pieces of work that are well progressed and that ensure that consumers are well placed to keep a track of their training and make informed choices about where to seek training. That comes to the theme that I have mentioned before about in the past TAFE was often seen as something, and still is seen—and many of us have them in our suburbs—as offering products that were not as responsive as they might have been. As a result of that we have certainly seen in user choice, which is the apprenticeship aspect of funding, more and more people choosing to access that funding in a different way through different methods than TAFE. The same thing was going to happen to VET revenue general, which is the other aspect of the VET funding, and we need to make sure that we give our clients, our customers, the people who want the real jobs, informed choices about where to seek training.

We have also established an independent assessment validation reference group to oversee the assessment of pilot projects to trial methods for independently validating registered training organisation assessment. So when people question whether RTOs will deliver what TAFEs will, we need to make sure that we do not see the problems that we have seen in other states. I am constantly working through with ASQA, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, to make sure that the way we monitor RTOs is also kept up to date, because ASQA does not actually have as many powers as most people would imagine. And as a state, for all that we have given those responsibilities over to ASQA, we need to make sure that we do not have the problems that have happened with RTOs in other states, where too much contestable funding was given too quickly to a market that was not ramped up to be able to accept it and they did not have the best outcomes in those states. As a result Victoria has wound that back in and that is why they have now created a model more similar to ours. We are not having contestable funding beyond 40 per cent, or the increase we have had this year to \$42 million. We are not increasing that level too quickly until after another year.

That is why we want to actively work with the Commonwealth to make sure that public providers are able to offer VET Fee-Help, another impediment to students who need loans for higher level qualifications. All requirements under the national partnership agreement are well progressed and on track or ahead of the time frames set for reporting. I would presume that is an answer that gives a lot of reassurance about our commitment, in conjunction with the federal government, to the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform.

CHAIR: With reference to page 16 of the SDS, could the minister please provide an update on school based apprenticeships and trainees?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is something that has been raised with me since the beginning of July. There is no doubt that, for a long time, students have been doing school based apprenticeships and traineeships. In fact, Queensland leads the nation in terms of the number of students in them. For committee members as local members and speaking myself as a local member—in fact, my son is doing a certificate III in media while in Year 11—we have no doubt that they are a great way for young students to see school as a practical way of gaining employment in areas that they may not choose to do long term, but giving them more skills that make them more employable in the future. Of course, school based apprenticeships and traineeships enable this by allowing students to embark on a chosen career or on one that may not be their chosen career but will be of assistance of them while they do other things, or one that will help them understand whether it is something that they want to do long term. All apprenticeships and traineeships are an employment based pathway towards a qualification.

Employers of apprentices and trainees must be able to provide or arrange to provide the range of work, facilities, supervision and training to allow for the successful completion of the apprenticeship or traineeship. To ensure that there is an amount of workplace experience, even if the traineeship is completed in less than the nominal term, the department reviewed the SAT policy and changes were made to bring in minimum requirements for school based training contracts effective from 1 January 2013. Again, I can give the very specific example of my own son who is doing a traineeship. At times school can be a priority on the Tuesday of every week that he is supposed to do it. Because we changed the rules to say you must do a minimum of 50 days prior to being eligible to complete a traineeship, he had to do extra days during his holidays. It also taught him something about the responsibility of the traineeship. He said, 'Thanks very much, Dad. You're the Minister for Education, Training and Employment and I now have to go back to the company to do the extra days,' In the past that meant that there was the possibility that you might have done a traineeship, but you may have done a bare minimum of days or, if the employer was not monitoring properly, they would give you the traineeship even though you may not have the skills that you were supposed to have. This shows that we are constantly monitoring those things to ensure that we are getting the proper requirements for them to fulfil what they need to have.

For the committee's information, I can give you the numbers: at 4 July 2013, there were 9,369 school based apprentices and trainees; 2,078 apprentices and 7,291 trainees. There are approximately 4,000 individual employers taking on SATs across Queensland. I thank them for their partnership with the government. We have accounted for approximately 50 per cent of school based training contracts across the country in Queensland. The latest school based training contract data shows us having 47.6 per cent of the nationwide total of 21,235.

At the Australian Training Awards in Melbourne last November, Queensland won one of the national training awards. Two out of the three schools nominated in that category were from Queensland. I think they were Moranbah and Blackwater. I know if I have that wrong I will hear about

it. I think Moranbah won it. Importantly, that is testament to the quality of our school based apprenticeships and traineeships, and the passion of the people involved. We want to support them, but we also want to make sure that it is not seen just as an avenue for kids who are not academic and, therefore, get taken to that particular section. They are great jobs, great trades, great futures and we need to support them. We also need to ensure that we are not just having the money taken without getting the right results.

I will further expand by saying that under our new initiative we are giving employers a \$5,000 bonus for retaining their school based apprentice in full-time work—the employer will get a \$5,000 bonus—after they leave school. That is through the three-year \$10 million School to Trade Pathway. That goes to the of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's question about what things we are doing to try to increase employment. Obviously, it is things like that. A bonus for keeping a school based apprentice whom they are happy with because they have had them for some time will no doubt help us to make some inroads into a very difficult demographic. Strategically, we know that we need to get younger unemployed people who have left school into things, because otherwise they are in danger of falling through the cracks.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, with reference to the key initiatives outlined on page 6 of the SDS, can you please update the committee on the progress of the \$10 million Supporting Women Scholarships initiative?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Once again, when we actually focus on broadening across the employment spectrum the involvement of people who may not traditionally have been involved in particular sectors, this is the sort of program that, as a government, we are very proud to do. Again, by increasing the diversity of people in particular jobs and particular sectors, it will help us achieve our focus on the four per cent goal within six years.

This is a significant scholarship program that funds 500 scholarships of up to \$20,000 over four years. They are for study from certificate IV through to postgraduate level in targeted male dominated fields experiencing skill shortages such as agriculture and environment studies, architecture and building, engineering, earth science and information technology. The Premier and I were pleased to present some of those scholarships just last year. The assistant minister for technical and further education was there as well. We saw women at all stages of their lives and careers who were eligible to apply, including young students straight out of school, women changing careers, women coming back after maybe having stopped for a few years to have a family or changing skills having had a family and deciding they want to do something different and returning to study and/or employment.

The applications for the 2013 academic year closed in October last year. There were 379 scholarship applications. We presented certificates to 40 scholarship recipients. At as 2 July 2013, there were 120 Supporting Women Scholarships recipients studying. The second round opens on 5 August 2013 and closes on 11 October for scholarships commencing at the beginning of the 2014 academic year.

Students still need to obtain a place in an eligible course and that is an important point. We are not trying to give them an unfair advantage. We are trying to give them some assistance, a hand up, through a course that would often be difficult to afford. It gives them peace of mind about things like that. It is an election commitment, of course. The committee recommends program guidelines, identifies scholarship fields of study—again, that is not done by me—overseeing the selection of meritorious awardees, monitoring implementation and outcomes, and acting as ambassadors for the scholarships and women in male dominated fields of study and/or employment. I have had a lot of testimonials from parents and people who have received scholarships, who are very appreciative and I know are determined to finish their course and put back into the Queensland economy as part of being good Queensland citizens.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, I refer to page 16 of the SDS service area and training, tertiary education and employment. Could you please update the committee on the implementation of the joint government and industry skilling response for areas impacted by ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald by providing \$1.9 million in subsidies to the 120 traineeship positions across the affected local councils?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know this is, of course, something that really affected Central Queensland and the areas represented by the member for Burnett and the member for Bundaberg. This was a significant announcement. Once again, this is a partnership with local government. In February 2013, at the Premier's behest, who really made it clear that the government should make sure that all our portfolios find ways to assist those communities, we approved \$3.92 million for the whole package to help local government and communities rebuild

and recover from those flood and storm impacts. There was \$1.92 million for local government traineeships, which was a response package, and a \$15,000 traineeship subsidy for 120 positions across 25 affected local councils. I am the first to acknowledge that many other councils throughout the state were affected devastatingly. We wanted to make sure a number of councils were involved to help maximise employment for people who had lost their other jobs. This provides 12 months of employment for the trainees, plus a nationally recognised qualification. Once again, it gives them a qualification that they can take elsewhere. It enables local residents to directly participate in the redevelopment of their community, which I am sure has been acknowledged.

The Local Government Association of Queensland coordinated the council bidding and assisted the department with the final allocation process. We awarded the LGAQ \$120,000 to manage the program in 2012-13 and 2013-14. The allocation was done in consultation with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. We requested bids from 54 council regions. In all, 25 councils, including four Aboriginal shire councils, are now employing 120 people in new traineeship positions. All grant funds were paid by 30 June 2013, with local councils given until 31 December 2013 to register trainees to suit individual council workforce requirements. The subsidy covers part of the cost of employing a trainee, with the remaining cost to be met by the local council. Again, there is a bit of mutual obligation there.

Mr SYMES: Minister, with reference to the key initiatives outlined on page 6 of the SDS, can you please outline to the committee what government funding is available to those people wishing to study higher level qualifications?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. As a government, we want to ensure that we are committed to essential courses and qualifications. We said we were going to reform the whole sector of vocational education and training to make sure that more people can get the skills Queensland needs. Because of that, we are changing the way we invest in training. We are transitioning to a market- and demand-driven investment model. We introduced the certificate III guarantee, which gives more Queenslanders the chance to gain a government subsidised certificate III qualification. That means that, under the guarantee, selected registered training organisations will compete for an additional \$42 million in contestable funding this financial year.

While new arrangements are in place for certificate III and below qualifications under the certificate III guarantee, the government will also provide subsidies for individuals seeking higher level qualifications in order to further or change their careers. Students wishing to undertake certificate IV and above qualifications may be eligible for a government subsidy in programs offered through TAFE Queensland in 2013-14. VET fee help is similar to the Higher Education Contribution Scheme, or HECS, in place for Australian government subsidised higher education programs under which students take out a loan to pay the non-subsidised component of their course costs. They repay the loan once they are earning a sufficiently high income, which is currently \$48,000.

As a government we are partnering with industry through the industry partnerships program to jointly fund training programs that provide a rapid training solution for those emerging or critical skills gaps in the broader economy or in particular regions. We have also invested \$10 million in the Supporting Women Scholarships program, to which I referred in a previous answer, which will fund 500 scholarships of up to \$20,000 over four years. As I have already mentioned, the scholarships support the economic pillars. You can see that it is not just lower order qualifications, even though they may be stepping stones to higher level ones. I am constantly working with the federal government at those ministerial councils, in conjunction with other TAFEs and TAFE providers from other states, to express those concerns about VET fee help being extended to our people who study vocational education and training.

CHAIR: That draws to a close this block of the government questions.

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, can I clarify one matter that the member for Woodridge asked me about, to get it out of the way?

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr LANGBROEK: This is about the staffing profile of the department in reference to two different numbers in the budget papers. The department's workforce grows each year in response to student enrolment increases and the establishment of new schools and facilities. At the same time, we have been commencing significant reforms across the portfolio. We are employing more staff to deliver improved services to Queensland in 2013 and 2014. Schools will benefit from some 724 additional teachers and teacher aides to meet enrolment growth. The net overall FTE growth of the agency in 2013-14 is expected to be 398 FTEs. The difference between the growth in the school

education section of the department and other areas of the department reflects the budgeted changes across the department in other areas. The government is committed to our reform agenda in all our business units and will shift our staffing profile accordingly.

I can advise the committee and the honourable member for Woodridge that the reduction in TAFE staff numbers that we have seen, for example, have not been as a result of the Skills and Training Taskforce. They have been because we have asked TAFE directors throughout the TAFE sector to do the things that they should be doing such as if they have a demand for particular courses that they are hiring teachers to teach those courses. The references we have seen to TAFE staff numbers declining in other parts is as a result of TAFE directors making those decisions. That has led to the difference in the two numbers.

CHAIR: I call the member for Mackay.

Mr MULHERIN: The department's proposed enterprise bargaining agreement for VET staff removes 'teacher' as a job category and abolishes the incremental pay scale previously available to staff with increased qualifications. This leaves only three possible job categories—assessor, tutor and trainer. Is it the government's intention to short-change VET students by discouraging staff from seeking higher qualifications?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. The proposal is before the Industrial Relations Commission and being negotiated at the moment. We are absolutely committed to having the best people doing the training in TAFE. As we are going through the whole enterprise bargaining, EB, agreement it is appropriate that we look at those particular clauses. We need to make sure we have people who have higher qualifications and that they are recognised so that that provides the incentive and encouragement for students to seek further qualifications. When it comes to the detail of your query about the three particular qualifications, I will defer to the CEO of TAFE Queensland.

Ms Schmidt: Thank you, Minister. Thank you for the question. The intent of the offer currently on the table for TAFE employees into the future does in fact take what was 26 pay scales in the educational employees range and reduce them to three which are tutor, assessor and teacher. We recently reissued the offer to acknowledge the change from trainer to teacher.

The intent and the offer is not to reduce the expectation of highly qualified employees in TAFE Queensland but rather to gain the flexibility in the discussion to ensure that we have the right skills in the right place delivering the right training, to be able to be reflective and responsive to industry into the future and to make sure that we are able to have an ongoing dialogue with our workforce. In addition to those positions is the concept of additional remuneration payments which employees will be able to access for undertaking a number of tasks. One would expect that higher qualifications would be required in order to access those additional remuneration payments. There is an ability for each individual to achieve eight of those. Their skills will be remunerated appropriately. It is really about ensuring we have value from our employees and that we reward that appropriately into the future.

Mr MULHERIN: Is this bringing it more into line with the private sector where you do not need teaching qualifications—that is, as long as you have a certificate IV train the trainer you can go and instruct?

Ms Schmidt: Absolutely not, although we do have to recognise that the national qualification requirement for delivering vocational education and training is a certificate IV in teacher training and assessment. Nonetheless, we are committed to the professionalism of our staff in TAFE Queensland. Personally, I have a passion for building the professionalism of a workforce that is not necessarily recognised as a destination vocation.

Mr MULHERIN: So moving away from the classification of teacher to the three categories of assessor, tutor and trainer you are not dumbing the instruction position down?

Ms Schmidt: Absolutely not. In fact we are putting a number of mechanisms in place under the reform program to ensure that we are bolstering that. Similarly, that is reflected—

Mr MULHERIN: Like what?

Ms Schmidt: In the VET action plan. The establishment of vocational education and training professional standards will be undertaken as part of the commitment from the government in the VET action plan. Similarly, inside TAFE Queensland we are creating beginning teacher programs and professional development strategies to ensure that we have the best workforce to be able to compete in the competitive marketplace into the future.

Mr MULHERIN: Will this be a national professional standard or a Queensland professional standard?

Ms Schmidt: There are many discussions being undertaken across the states at this point in time. Next month I will convene a national roundtable to talk about the need for a national set of professional standards. At this point in time Queensland is creating its standards and working with the other states in that vein.

Mr MULHERIN: In answer to a government question the minister made mention of having regulatory oversight of the private sector RTOs through a Commonwealth agency. One minute employment is not a state responsibility, but when it comes to oversight of RTOs they will come back into the equation. Is the national body looking at developing national professional standards? If you are going to regulate or oversight the courses that these registered training organisations are delivering there has to be some way of measuring apples with apples. What is happening in that space?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am happy for Jodi to expand at the end of what I am about to say. They are the discussions we have all the time at ministerial councils. It is about making sure that we have national standards. When we have a registered organisation we have to make sure they are living up to the standards that we expect. TAFE has always had a very good brand, but it has not been as nimble as it might have been. In a contestable market we have to make sure that we do not have people taking advantage of that contestability and not providing the outcomes. Tied in with all of that is making sure that the people who are teaching have qualifications that could potentially be nationally recognised just as we do across other professions. We are looking at that as part of the body of work on the national seamless economy. There are some things that just do not make sense and have not made sense over time. We will sort that out in terms of the people teaching in our TAFEs as well.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, so you can give a guarantee to this committee that the professional standards that your department is developing for the assessor, tutor and trainer will not be of lesser standard than currently exists under the old structure?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. We will ensure the standard of the training in our TAFEs and in our registered training organisations. You are speaking specifically about TAFE. If we were to 'dumb down the quality', to use the honourable member's term, of the people doing the training in our TAFEs then we would have graduates who would not have the recognised skills or experience when they get out on the job site. That would lead to a further diminution in the skills of people undertaking TAFE training. As the CEO has already said, we want to make sure that people are not leaving TAFEs to go to private RTOs because of the opportunities offered, but see people come to TAFE because they want to be there and their talents and abilities are recognised and it is a vibrant workplace that is improving as well.

Mr MULHERIN: Will those professional standards apply to Queensland based registered training organisations other than TAFE?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy for Jodi to expand on this. Remember that these are negotiations that we have with other ministers. Other states do not just automatically sign up to them. I am happy to make sure that the standard of our teachers in Queensland, whichever sector they are in—just as all Queensland's non-TAFE teachers are registered with the Queensland College of Teachers—are similar so that you are not getting or expecting a higher standard in one area than another which would lead to different outcomes from the training provided.

Mr MULHERIN: I have a follow-on for you before we go to the CEO.

Mr LANGBROEK: Before we do, I am happy for the CEO to give some more detail about that.

Ms Schmidt: What is outlined in the VET action plan is an intention to establish best practice professional standards over a number of years to gain a professionalism thrust in the VET sector. I commend the government on that because it is an important thing for the sector into the future. In terms of TAFE professional standards, it is absolutely in TAFE's interests to ensure that they have the best teaching workforce into the future as we are contesting and competing in a marketplace and making sure that TAFE remains what it is today, in our view, which is the benchmark of quality in future.

In terms of your other question around regulatory compliance with this, there is a review of the current legislation under which ASQA, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, undertakes its duties. That has been led by the Hon. John Dawkins. A number of recommendations are up for consideration at this point in time.

The key issues in that regard—the issues that are key to the VET sector across this country—are quality and the outcomes for training which, very clearly in terms of the actions taken here and certainly that TAFE Queensland will take into the future, are about ensuring employment for the people of Queensland. The NSSC has made recommendations to strengthen the regulatory framework, which are yet to be enshrined in legislation. They are expected to be implemented over the next 18 months.

Mr MULHERIN: Thank you, Ms Schmidt. Minister, you were saying that TAFE has to compete with the private sector. You are saying that you are not going to reduce the professional standards of the current teachers at TAFE. How do you expect them to compete when the same professional standards do not apply to the RTOs that are currently in the Queensland marketplace? How do they ever compete if the registered training organisations run by the private sector do not have the same professional standards?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question, but I do not accept the assertion that he is making—that is, that we are going to have two different sets of professional standards for people in the VET sector, whether they are in the TAFE system or otherwise. We will make sure that we do it in a way that is clear and unequivocal. We would never seek to disadvantage or advantage a particular sector—that is, you have to adhere to different standards for TAFE as compared to RTOs. I do not accept the assertion.

Mr MULHERIN: Will there be a registration board to oversee these people's qualifications?

Mr LANGBROEK: At the moment we are having a general discussion about these things.

Mr MULHERIN: That is what estimates is for.

Mr LANGBROEK: We are not actually referring to specific aspects of the SDS. It is more like a private chitchat of these things.

Mr MULHERIN: Enterprise bargaining is on page 24 of the SDS.

Mr LANGBROEK: I know, but now you are asking about the registering authority for TAFE teachers.

Mr MULHERIN: Your department raised the issue around registration.

Mr LANGBROEK: As we work through the enterprise bargain process which, at the moment, is still in the Industrial Relations Commission we will work through this. I have a very clear message for the people in the VET sector. We want to improve the way they are regarded. I do not think anyone would want their children to be taught at school, at university or in the vocational education and training sector by somebody who is not registered in some form or other. Otherwise they are not going to have a recognised qualification. It goes without saying that we are going to have standards.

Everyone in the sector has to be at those standards, whether you are an RTO providing the training or whether you are the employing authority and taking government revenue and money from private citizens to pay for courses. We will make sure that everyone is registered. We want the vocational education and training sector well regarded, as I have already said today, not seen as the second best option. We want it to be the best fit. Great trade qualifications are just as important as tertiary qualifications. They may help people transition from one to the other.

I have said since I have been minister that education needs to be seen as more of a horizontal continuum. The people providing the training in that sector are also important and valued. They need to make sure that they are seen as that by the registering authority of the day.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, the 2013-14 budget papers predict TAFE full-time equivalent positions to decrease from 6,444 in 2012-13 to 6,022—that is 422 full-time equivalent positions. How many individuals are going to be directly impacted by these cuts?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This probably goes to the heart of what I was speaking about before in answer to the honourable member for Woodridge in my explanation of total staff numbers in the budget papers. These are decisions that are often being made by institute directors about courses they are offering, enrolments that are there and courses that are being offered in terms of the government's priority and therefore leading to some numbers—and this has already happened over the last year—in different institutes around the state where those institute directors are making their own decisions based on enrolments. That is why again I would like to ask Jodi Schmidt, the CEO of TAFE, to add to that answer. By the way, it is not just TAFE. I advise the honourable member that it also covers skills, training and employment—those areas of my agency.

Ms Schmidt: The differential between the 2012-13 figure and the 2013-14 figure represents in the main measures that were taken and provided in answer to a question on notice in terms of redundancies that the TAFE institutes collectively have undertaken between the start of 2012-13 and 2013-14. In addition, there have been a number of staffing changes throughout the department that the department could attest to in that regard.

Mr MULHERIN: How many of these positions are educational staff and how many are administrative and support staff?

Mr LANGBROEK: Again—

Mr MULHERIN: Will you take that on notice?

Mr LANGBROEK:—these are decisions that are still made at a local level. But there is no doubt that in TAFE especially we have had significantly more people in administrative and support staff than we have teachers, and that is something that of course adds to costs. It is a bit like the situation in my department where we have said we need to focus on the front line. Those are details that are still worked out at a local level, so I cannot provide that.

Mr MULHERIN: Will you provide that information?

Mr LANGBROEK: I do not know that I can because it is a budgetary plan. It is a prediction about staff numbers, but I can ask the CEO. She might be able to provide more detail. But my answer is that it would be similar to the current situation where we have local TAFE directors, based on enrolment demand, making those decisions locally.

Ms Schmidt: What would happen into the future, into the future financial year, I cannot predict. That will be in response to what student demand looks like, particularly on the teaching side. There is no doubt that through the reform program there are a number of amalgamations to take place and that we will be looking at staffing. But at the end of the day staffing numbers for TAFE Queensland will depend on its success in the marketplace into the future, and of course we are backing ourselves on ensuring that we can maintain the levels of training delivery that we deliver today.

In terms of the numbers that we were referring to before, we would be able to provide the breakdown of the numbers to date between teaching and administrative staff, but I reinforce what the minister has said that the balance would be on the administrative side. Although where there is not demand for teaching programs, there are certainly circumstances where teaching numbers need to be managed in that regard.

Mr MULHERIN: So, Minister, you will provide that information to date that Ms Schmidt—

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr MULHERIN: Do you plan to use the removal of class size ratios from the EB as a further justification to reduce the number of full-time equivalents at TAFE?

Mr LANGBROEK: Again, the details about class size ratios—we are speaking about the TAFE EB?

Mr MULHERIN: Yes.

Mr LANGBROEK: No. I will ask the CEO again to refer to that, because you are speaking about a specific clause within the enterprise bargaining agreement. The class size targets in education anywhere are significant issues, but most of the classes that I have seen do not come anywhere near class size targets, especially in TAFE. Again, I am happy for the CEO to expand.

Ms Schmidt: The intent of taking class size limitations—and they are limitations in the current certified agreement—out of the agreement is to take advantage of opportunities whereby perhaps theory components of programs can be delivered to classes of a larger number than what is currently 24 or 28 as a total number under the current agreement and to recognise that in many instances our training is delivered in a place that requires particular safety requirements. And, of course, I would not expect and would never expect classes undertaken over, say, 14 which is the current number particularly in trade based arrangements.

The intent of the class size removal from the industrial arrangement is to enable delivery to happen in the place that it needs to happen and in the way that it needs to happen in order to respond to industry, employers and individuals. As the student demand model takes hold, that is going to be important. Not to be able to negotiate that on an as needs basis is a significant constraint to the responsiveness of the business into the future, and that is the reason why we have asked it to come out of the agreement itself.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Schmidt. That brings to an end this block of non-government questions. I now call the member for Waterford.

Mr LATTER: With reference to the key initiatives outlined on page 6 of the SDS, can the minister please outline to the committee the total budget allocated to giving every year 12 graduate an extra incentive to enrol in high priority qualifications by offering fee-free training if they start training with a preferred training provider within a year of leaving school?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. We have budgeted for this fee-free training initiative for year 12 graduates \$5.5 million. Under this initiative the Queensland government will pay fees on behalf of year 12 graduates who enrol in high priority courses within a year of finishing school. The fee free aims to encourage student demand for courses which develop the skills most needed by the economy. It is something that we are also doing across the department not just in non-Indigenous schooling but in Indigenous schooling as well.

Before I came to government I remember being told by my local regional director at a schools function that with Indigenous students, for example, if we do not try to get them something within the first few months of year 13—the year after school—there is a significant risk of them falling through the cracks. This of course applies to other students as well. We all know that if students do not find a job, if they do not go on to university—and for all that they might do a gap year—we want to provide some more incentives for some students to go straight to, as you have asked in your question, a preferred training provider and enrol in a high priority qualification. What we are basically saying to them is, 'If you do this, the government is almost offering you a job because we know that it is a high priority qualification that will lead to a job.' Therefore, we are encouraging students who, when they are weighing up what they want to do, might think, 'Do I want to go to uni and have a part-time job or do I want to have a gap year?' We are sure—we know based on research—that there will be some who will not be at risk then of falling through the cracks if they are at the end of the spectrum of not wanting to do anything at all or not seeing an opportunity as opposed to having an opportunity to get into training to get a skill that is most needed by the economy.

It will provide an incentive for current and future year 12 students to undertake a high priority qualification. The initiative will apply to high priority courses delivered as part of the Certificate III Guarantee program and the User Choice program for apprentices and trainees. I am sure that the honourable member and the committee are aware—as I am when I go to schools and I meet year 12s—that they all have different ideas. When you ask, 'What is it that you are going to do next year?' some of them say, 'I would like to be an electrical apprentice,' 'I would like to be a fitter and turner,' 'I want to go overseas,' 'I want to travel,' 'I want to go to university,' 'I want to go to TAFE.' They all have different ideas. We are looking for different ways to provide incentives for students to think, 'I want to get a job. It is a priority for me,' because we know that getting that job and the right qualification will set them on the right path and we need to do as much as we can to support them. That is the idea of that incentive, giving these year 12 graduates an extra incentive to go on to study and get a real job.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS. Under key highlights for training, tertiary education and employment, it lists the implementation of the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce report and the release of the five-year action plan. Could you please describe how Queensland's model differs to Victoria's?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank you, Madam Chair, for the question because there is so much debate around training. The way it has been done and the way other states and territories have done training has been considered by our task force, and we have looked at the examples of what has happened in other states. When I was in opposition and the shadow minister for education and training in the 52nd Parliament, Victoria at that stage was held up as a model of how we should be freeing up the training system—in other words, let people train for whatever they want, make sure that people are funded to be able to do that course and training providers would then be funded accordingly in what was basically a contestable market. What that meant was that there were people who took advantage of that and, subsequently, Victoria had a review of that, as I have already mentioned to the committee, and has brought back some of those things and had to put about \$300 million back into its TAFEs.

So what we have said in Queensland is let's make it about the three Ps here—productivity, participation and pathways. We need to focus, and the government is focused, obviously on the two fours—the four pillars and four per cent unemployment. But we need to make sure that people have the opportunity to participate but that they know how to be able to do it as well. I went into a simulated coalmine in Mackay just a couple of weeks ago to encourage the young women there who were also

saying they wanted to become electrical fitters or diesel fitters or electricians. This was an example of how we have said we need to give them the pathways to be able to participate in areas that they may not traditionally have thought they could, and that will lead to increased productivity—in other words, the costs that we have to provide the things we do in our economy as opposed to the skills that we have that go to provide those things.

In Victoria there was a training guarantee in 2008, and that is what I was referring to. It provided this entitlement to a government subsidised training course. They uncapped the overall number of training places and places were no longer allocated to particular providers. They underestimated the demand and they got significant pressure on their budget. As a result, in 2012 they made changes to their model including reducing the level of subsidy by the government provided for qualifications in non-priority areas.

What we are doing in Queensland with the Certificate III Guarantee is providing a higher level of subsidy in priority areas, which means lower student fees for those qualifications. In lower priority areas the level of government subsidy is lower. Higher student fees for lower priority courses will direct students into higher priority courses which offer better chances of employment. I know that can sound a bit confusing when you hear it, but it will make sense when you read it in the *Hansard*. That is about saying, 'If you want to do a course for which we have identified—we, the government—through our research that there is not a great amount of demand for, if you choose to do that particular course, you may have to pay more to do it.' The government is not necessarily going to subsidise those courses to the extent that they have been.

I know there are some people who agonise about us using particular examples, but a great example is the fitness industry. It is very easy to say to people, to young people especially, 'No. You don't have to do physio at university. You don't have to do human movement. You don't have to do phys. ed. teaching. Become a fitness trainer.' There is no doubt there is a plethora of courses, many of which are admirable courses, but that is something the government has to look at and say, 'Is that really going to help our economy, our productivity and our overall output?' It is not that we do not need to have fitness as an important part of life, wellness and wellbeing, but we need to balance our limited training dollars with who we provide subsidies to and how much we provide those subsidies in the quantum.

So we have said we need to make sure that we get training providers working with their local industries. That is the direct line of sight of industry who would say to us, 'We are trying to tell you that we need certain jobs and certain qualifications. We cannot get enough people with those qualifications.' We want to make sure that they get a direct line of sight to the Ministerial Industry Commission to make sure that we get demand for trained workers in those areas in which they provide training.

What it also means is that in Victoria participants under 20 years of age can access two government subsidised training places at any level. Participants who are 20 years of age or over can access two government subsidised training places for qualifications that are higher than the level they currently hold. When the Victorian model was implemented, a minimum and maximum student contribution fee a training provider could charge for each course was specified. The minimum contribution fee has now been removed, but a cap on the hourly fee per scheduled contact hour has been retained. This action was based on recommendations from the 2011 Victorian Essential Services Commission's VET Fee and Funding Review.

In Queensland, whilst it is expected that the student will make a contribution to the cost of the training, no minimum student contribution has been set. This ensures prices are set by the market rather than government. When the Victorian arrangements commenced, the government paid a different rate—higher for TAFE institutes than non-TAFE training providers. Now both TAFE and non-TAFE providers receive the same level of subsidy.

The reason I wanted to outline that is because there is often significant anecdotal advice given to us as members of parliament and the committee about what is happening in other jurisdictions. I can assure the committee that what Queensland has done, by not being first in and waiting to see the adjustments that have been made in other jurisdictions, has enabled us to refine what we are trying to achieve on behalf of the interests of Queensland. There is no question that we want more and more Queenslanders studying in better facilities, but we also want qualifications that are going to lead to real jobs, which leads to the four per cent unemployment target that we are aiming for, especially in the four pillars.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, with reference to the highlights outlined on page 2 of the SDS, can you outline what investment in modern training infrastructure the department will make to maximise the use of public training assets?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. It has been of great concern to me as the minister responsible that people within our public training assets have had significant uncertainty thrust upon them due to a lot of hysteria and campaigning on the eve of a federal election that they should be fearful about the future. What we say in education for our principals, for example, or for our quality teacher programs is that we want to encourage people to excel in what they do and that they will be recognised for the quality of what they do.

It is similar with the assets that we have as part of my portfolio. We know that the utilisation of TAFE facilities is low—at about 40 per cent I think is what came out of the task force—and that not all the facilities are in opportune locations. They may have been many years ago when they were first set up, but there have been changes in public transport and in the way that people travel around cities and non-metropolitan areas. The way people get around now is different from when these facilities were often built, which was in the sixties and seventies. The way those assets have been used has limited how TAFE itself has been able to invest in new markets. In fact, the two statutory authorities which we have now dismantled to bring into TAFE Queensland were the ones with the most autonomy—that is, the Gold Coast and Southbank. Southbank is regarded as the flagship, of course, and it does have the highest utilisation. The Gold Coast, which has six campuses, had the freedom to come up with its own infrastructure plan. Of its own volition it came up with a plan to say, 'We will need to put these students where the light rail is going to be. We need students who can access those suburbs that have modern facilities,' because students do not want to study in run-down facilities and they need to be able to get there easily so make them along transport nodes. So the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE came up with its own infrastructure plan which we have put on hold while the new CEO and the new board come to a discussion about what they are going to do.

We announced last week that they are going to spend \$7 million upgrading the Southport facility. That is an example of the things that have been done at statutory authorities. We have not been able to do that with the assets up to now that are contained within my department. At the moment—and this is where there has been significant scaremongering about properties that we have in the department—13 of them had no students in them. They were costing us money to secure, maintain and repair. They have been approved for sale. Another 12 are expected to transfer with the proposed merger of the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE and Central Queensland University. We have said that the proceeds from the sale of these TAFE properties will be reinvested into the state's training system and will support this more commercially focused TAFE Queensland.

We are having a strategic asset plan finalised by December 2013, and that will make recommendations to government about the best models of owning, managing and reinvesting in our training, asset and capital base. That is what Drew Ellem is working on with Projects Queensland, as we have already discussed this afternoon. It is obvious that the portfolio of training assets has not been utilised to its maximum over a number of years. We want to increase utilisation by improving access to make it fit for purpose and to have high-quality training infrastructure and contemporary modes of service delivery that meets Queensland's needs. As I said, we want to increase the capacity of our training market and increase the access to vocational education and training. We are supporting this reform of TAFE Queensland to make sure we have a well-planned and executed transition to a modern public provider that is responsive to the needs of its students, industry and community.

Mr BENNETT: With reference to the performance statement on page 16 of the SDS, can the minister outline what new plans the government has for increasing the proportion of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders participating in education, training or employment immediately after completing year 12?

Mr LANGBROEK: I again thank the honourable member for the question. This is a follow-on from the discussion we have had throughout this estimates committee about the simple principle of education being the single biggest driver of our economy and our society. All of us who go to functions are told that Indigenous elders or senior teachers and principals—older people—tell the young people about the importance of getting an education. I know to some young people that is seen as a bit trite, but there is no doubt that education can make the single biggest change to people's lives, and a number of us in the parliament can attest to that. That applies to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders as well.

A significant commitment to which I have already referred and which the former government put a lot of focus on was Closing the Gap in schools. We have said that, if students do not complete year 12 or equivalent, we know they are likely to have fewer opportunities. So we want to make sure via our plan to succeed Closing the Gap that we deal with all four areas: early childhood, education, training—which of course includes vocational education and training and university—and employment. That is why we announced that in NAIDOC Week. It is to ensure that those students have the support they need to achieve success at four critical phases. The first one is from zero to eight. They can learn, thrive and make successful transitions from home to early childhood education and care in school. Secondly, we want school students enrolled, engaged and achieving in school and progressing at the same rate as non-Indigenous students. Thirdly, we want students to make a successful transition from school to training, further study or into employment. Fourthly, we want young people to make a successful transition from training or further study into employment.

You can see from that there are certainly a lot of challenges for us and for many communities. I think it is important to point out that of our 50,000 Indigenous students a very large proportion is in the younger age bracket from nought to 17. It is very important to realise that they are not just on the cape or in the gulf. I think this is something that a lot of metropolitan based Queenslanders and people in regional cities do not necessarily acknowledge, but in Logan and Woodridge there is a significant population. In fact, 80 per cent of those 50,000 students are all around us. They are amongst us and they are of us. That is why through Solid partners Solid futures we as a government want to make sure, whether via early years centres or children and family centres, we give those students and their families the support they need. It is very labour intensive but we are committed to doing it to make sure that all Indigenous Queenslanders are recognised and given the support they need, not in a way that suggests they are getting something that someone else does, because we need to provide wraparound services for students whom we have spoken about today who are behaviourally challenged, and that impacts on all the other students.

What we want to do is make sure that they transition. I have said that quite clearly today. We want to make sure there is a single point of contact for employers to help them link with schools. So many of them say, 'I would love to put on Indigenous students. I don't know how to do it.' We want to have a single point of contact. We want to have an online portal that shares information with all partners and that provides direction and highlights priorities for investment. There are a lot of people with goodwill, both the industry and employment, who want to assist. We know there is a lot of goodwill but sometimes government needs to make sure those pathways are there to access the services and the students they want to. We want to incorporate student employment opportunities into state-wide industry employment agreements and incorporate employers into the developing and monitoring of student employment programs. If they are part of developing students and monitoring them, they are going to want to employ them. We need to have opportunities for employers to engage with schools to inform students of career paths or employment options. It is the sort of thing that I am considering for my son, who is halfway through year 11 and is not sure yet what he is going to do post year 12. He is typical of the hundreds of thousands of students we have. They should not have to decide when they are 17 what they are going to do for the rest of their lives.

We want to continue the year 12 Destinations Initiative, which focuses on assisting year 12 students to transition into further education, training or employment, and expand the individual case management of students from six months to 12 months post year 12. It is not just watching out for them for the first semester but for the whole year after they leave year 12. We want to implement aspirations in university linkage programs to increase tertiary enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and link students and schools to available scholarships. Everybody in my department, whether it is universities or training organisations, speaks to me about the importance they hold in engaging with their Indigenous cohort and supporting them and their families as well as they do in our local schools and early childhood centres.

CHAIR: That draws to a close this block of government questions. I now call on the member for Mackay.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, in response to a government question you stated that 13 TAFE properties on the Gold Coast or the south-east corner will be up for sale—

Mr LANGBROEK: No, there are 13 properties that are for sale at the moment. There is a list. I am happy to provide it. It has been provided a number of times.

Mr MULHERIN: That will be good.

Mr LANGBROEK: There are some that are for sale, some that are listed for sale and some that are under contract, but a number of them were for sale when we came into government as well.

Mr MULHERIN: Do you give that list right across Queensland?

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes.

Mr MULHERIN: Thanks. Minister, on page 10 of the SDS in relation to staffing we glean that there are 422 positions or full-time equivalents that will go this financial year with the restructure of TAFE and with the introduction of the TAFE Queensland Bill. Do you expect more than 422 with the restructure of TAFE?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. They are things that, once we have the commercial board and the CEO, we would not be expecting—

Mr MULHERIN: So it could be higher?

Mr LANGBROEK: That is a prediction we have made. I am confident that any authority working with us—sorry, that is the list of TAFE sites—will be aware of what our prediction is or what our plan is but I will ask—

Mr MULHERIN: Before you refer to the deputy director-general, in coming to those figures has any modelling been done around the new structure and what the staff requirements will be? Will TAFE continue to offer TAFE students support services including learning support, library services, careers and personal counselling? Will that be in the new TAFE model or not? Will RTOs have library services or a whole range of support services?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. One of the strong statements we have made throughout this is the acknowledgement of the extra services that TAFE provides. So whilst the board to which you are referring will have a commercial focus, we have also said that as part of our community service obligation we need to acknowledge the things that TAFE provides, both in the funding it is awarded and in the direction we give to the statutory authority as we give it its responsibilities.

Mr MULHERIN: So you will guarantee those services?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am not going to guarantee all of them, because that is something that needs to be looked at on an individual basis. But we need to make sure there is recognition of the fact that TAFE provides some services that no-one else is going to provide unless they are resourced to do so.

Mr MULHERIN: So you cannot guarantee because if you did they would not be able to compete with the private sector RTOs?

Mr LANGBROEK: There will always be an element of TAFE that has to be provided as part of the CSO, simply because the private sector is not going to provide training in some of these other areas. I will ask Jodi to expand, though.

Ms Schmidt: We are talking about creating a training market. TAFE Queensland certainly takes the view that the services that are offered to complement the product delivery—being the delivery of training—are of benefit to the student. In a frame where students make decisions about the right training for them, it would be our view that the students will be attracted to a holistic, wraparound service that TAFE Queensland offers.

Mr MULHERIN: But isn't it the employer that makes the decision?

Ms Schmidt: Absolutely. Well, TAFE Queensland will make the decision about whether it offers the services, but one would think the individual student and/or employers will make decisions about training purchases. In fact, delivery of training in this state mostly happens to single subscribers or individuals, and we seek to grow the employer supported training market into the future.

Mr MULHERIN: You were saying earlier that employers were voting with their feet, going to other training providers because of the current model. The current model has all of those ancillary services to support students with learning disabilities, libraries et cetera. Won't nothing change if TAFE still has to carry that overhead? It will not be able to compete against the RTOs that do not have the same level of support that TAFE provides to students.

Ms Schmidt: I think we make an assumption that students will make a decision only on price. If we are talking about competing on price—

Mr MULHERIN: Most employers who have spoken to me about TAFE say, 'I go to the private RTO because you get things done a lot quicker and they respond to my needs. They do not have all this other stuff they have to worry about that TAFE has to worry about.' Can you guarantee that that service will continue—that students will have support services such as learning support, libraries, counselling?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to take part of the question myself. Let us look at other organisations that provide training. Universities are great examples, as are other RTOs. I do not believe that other organisations like RTOs would say that they do not care about the wellbeing of the student.

Mr MULHERIN: I am not saying that. I am talking about the different levels.

Mr LANGBROEK: But will some of those services be provided in particular areas? Yes, they will be, simply because that is something you need to do to ensure the wellbeing of your students. In answer to the suggestion that employers only go to RTOs because the students can get the course done more quickly, I would have thought that if they are not getting a student who is trained in the way they need to be trained to do the job well then they would have significant problems with the RTO as well.

I think the suggestions I am hearing are QTU inspired questions always proclaiming, 'Woe are we in the TAFE sector! The minister and the government are trying to emasculate us.' As I have said all day, that is not what we are about. If we have 13 facilities that are empty, not fit for use and ready for sale, we need to continue that. If we have facilities that are 40 per cent occupied, something needs to be done, because you cannot just have an empty building with equipment that has been borrowed, begged or stolen from someone else—and that is what I have seen in a lot of facilities. We want to ensure students want to come to these vibrant places where services are provided for their emotional wellbeing as well—just as RTOs have to provide that, because if they have unhappy students they will not be able to get the course done.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, you always go on about the QTU and the QTU rant. On the other hand, you are saying that you are committed to ensuring we have a modernised TAFE that is able to deliver and compete with the private sector. It is reasonable to ask you about the level of support compared to the private sector without getting a bash-up on the QTU.

Mr LANGBROEK: Is the Queensland Teachers Union feeling a bit sensitive?

Mr MULHERIN: I am not a member of the Queensland Teachers Union, but every time we ask a rational question—you must have nightmares about the QTU—your immediate response to defend any line of questioning is to go out and bash a professional organisation that represents the interests of teachers.

CHAIR: Member for Mackay, this is not a discussion.

Mr MULHERIN: Well, he brought it up, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Your role is to ask a question.

Mr MULHERIN: I am entitled to put my point of view if the minister puts his point of view in relation to his hatred of the QTU.

Mr LANGBROEK: 'Hate' is a very strong word, Madam Chair.

Mr MULHERIN: You seem to get upset every time—

Mr LATTE: Point of order, Madam Chair: imputation.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr MULHERIN: Anyway, Minister, you cannot guarantee that the same level of support will be there for students.

CHAIR: Member for Woodridge.

Mrs SCOTT: Minister, what will happen to current TAFE employees whose work entails responsibility for maintenance of assets and facilities such as cleaners, maintenance staff and so on?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. We have made sure with the legislation we are bringing into the House that existing entitlements will be honoured in terms of their employment. Those other matters into the future, though—once it becomes a statutory authority with a CEO—will be determined, as they should be, on a commercial level. I will ask Jodi again to respond.

Ms Schmidt: As we noted before, decisions of government are yet to be taken with regard to how the assets are owned, managed and maintained into the future. So, too, will the issue of the way in which that staffing arrangement happens. However, we would foresee that TAFE Queensland would continue to have a need for and would expect the transition of, from the department, all of the TAFE Queensland staff that currently exist and, as we continue to build a stronger TAFE Queensland,

that business will manage its staffing needs in response to the market it is operating in. In short I would say: at this point in time it is too early to say, until we understand the outcome of the assets question, and that would be part of that process. Otherwise, it is business as usual.

Mrs SCOTT: Thank you. Minister, what will be the similarities and the differences between the conditions under which TAFE will be able to access and use its former facilities and the conditions under which other RTOs will access these facilities? On what basis will charges be made? Will it be on a for-profit or cost-recovery basis?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Again, these are matters in relation to which we have said that if we have underutilisation of assets then third parties need to be able to access them. But they are aspects that Drew Ellem of course will be working on with Projects Queensland. So we are still working those out. The principles, though, are ones we do not resile from. In terms of underutilised assets, people may say, 'I would like to provide a course,' just as TAFE might ask, 'Why do we have to own infrastructure to provide a course?' There are lots of companies now that have staffed offices; they do not have to be in their own offices. To give industry the people who are being trained in the way they want to have them trained in order to give them the jobs they want to, we need to work through all of those matters, to reassure TAFE staff that we want them to be part of this vibrant organisation in great infrastructure. It may not necessarily be infrastructure that they own. I am happy for Drew to expand.

Mr Ellem: I do not have a lot to add. Again, all of those matters will be worked through by Projects Queensland in conjunction with the department. So matters of access and the arrangements that will apply to those access arrangements, whether it be TAFE or other RTOs, are yet to be resolved.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, the budget papers show that the budgeted Queensland government contribution to training, tertiary education and employment in 2013-14 is \$43.9 million lower than in 2012-13. Is this not evidence that the government's real agenda in VET is to cut the cost and not improve service delivery? You have slashed \$43.9 million.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Some of these issues are ones we have dealt with through the day today. Some of that funding is from productivity—

Mr MULHERIN: No, this is state contribution. If you go to page 10 of the SDS you see that the state source of revenue is \$649.302 million. The previous year was \$693.211 million. It is a reduction of \$43.9 million.

Mr LANGBROEK: Page 10?

Mr MULHERIN: Page 10: 'Sources of revenue, state contribution'. There is a reduction on the previous year of \$43.9 million.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to take the question on notice and provide the detail, but, as I have already said, the \$48 million in additional funding from 2012-13 to 2013-14 was for the skills reform national partnership—

Mr MULHERIN: I am just talking about state contribution, not Commonwealth.

Mr LANGBROEK: Page 10 of my SDS is headed 'Staffing'.

Mr MULHERIN: It has 'sources of revenue, total cost'—

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to find it, but I do not have the page—

Mr MULHERIN: Page 13, I should say.

Mr LANGBROEK: So you are asking about that but you cannot even tell me which page number it is!

Mr MULHERIN: Page 13: 'Sources of revenue, state contribution'.

Mr LANGBROEK: And you are referring to—

Mr MULHERIN: Training, tertiary education and employment, state contribution, \$649.302 million. It is a reduction of \$43.9 million on the previous year.

Mr LANGBROEK: Okay. I thank the honourable member for the question. The reduced level refers to the impact of those TAFE savings we have spoken about today and the discontinuation of Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which was quite well publicised last year. That was the end of those contracts as they have come through, and Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which has ceased.

Mr MULHERIN: I refer to question on notice No. 6. Minister, are the 349 redundancies in the TAFE sector in addition to the 10,600 redundancies detailed at page 80 of Budget Paper No. 2?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the member for the question. I think I have already mentioned today a number of times that those numbers in TAFE were due to local redundancies. Again, I am happy to take that on notice and get that information to you.

Mr MULHERIN: Thanks, Minister. We have heard a lot today about vulnerable members of our community having access to courses that will provide them with skills to engage in the workforce in a meaningful way. The TAFE funding cuts for 2013-14 include a significant reduction in funding for courses in these core skills for employment and education. The state funding for these courses has dropped from \$9,000 to approximately \$2,200, leaving only federal funding. If you are going to do that, how are you going to assist these individuals—migrants and people with disabilities—learn those basic skills to get jobs? I am talking about things such as literacy and numeracy.

CHAIR: I have to say that the time has actually expired.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to say very briefly, Madam Chair, that we have spoken a number of times today about \$47 million over five years to support disadvantaged learners, but it is actually real training. Those other courses to which the honourable member refers were a federal government responsibility and we said that we were not going to provide that via Skilling Queenslanders for Work or Get Set for Work.

Mr MULHERIN: So literacy and numeracy are not your caper?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to complete my answer by saying that we are providing these opportunities for disadvantaged learners and completing accredited training up to certificate III.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr Mulherin interjected.

CHAIR: Member for Mackay, I would prefer it if you stopped making those inferences. The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Training and Employment has expired. Minister, on behalf of the committee I sincerely thank you. I thank the director-general, Dr Jim Watterston, Ms Jodi Schmidt, Mr Drew Ellem and the departmental officials for your attendance and for your informing our examination of the proposed appropriation. The committee will now adjourn and return at 3.30 to consider the estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank you, too, Madam Chair, on behalf of my staff and I. I also thank the committee officers, Hansard staff and all members of the committee. The hearing was conducted in relatively good nature—until the deputy opposition leader came in this afternoon and started firing up! I do want to thank all members. It has been a thorough investigation of the budget figures for 2013-14 and I thank all members for their attendance today.

Proceedings suspended from 3.01 pm to 3.29 pm

ESTIMATES—EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE—SCIENCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND THE ARTS

In Attendance

Hon. IB Walker, Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Ms D Balke, Chief of Staff

Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Mr A Garner, Director-General

Mr A Spina, Deputy Director-General, Government ICT

Mr D Crombie, Deputy Director-General, Innovation and Science Development

Dr C Williams, Assistant Director-General, Science Delivery

Mr M Burnheim, Assistant Director-General, Shared Services

Ms R McLucas, Chief Finance Officer

Dr G Garrett, Queensland Chief Scientist

Mr E Hill, Deputy Director-General (Acting), Arts Queensland

Queensland Art Gallery

Mr C Saines, Director

Queensland Museum

Prof. S Miller, Chief Executive Officer

Queensland Performing Arts Centre

Mr J Kotzas, Chief Executive Officer

Queensland Theatre Company

Ms S Donnelly, Executive Director

Screen Queensland

Mr B Lowe, Chief Executive Officer

State Library of Queensland

Ms J Wright, Chief Executive Officer and State Librarian



CHAIR: Before we start, I ask that all mobile phones be switched off or set to silent. The committee will now examine the budget estimates for the Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts portfolio. As I said at the start of this morning's session, today's hearing is being webcast live, with archived footage available on the committee's web page immediately after the close of the hearing. The transcript of today's proceedings will be available from Hansard's web page approximately two hours after this session ends.

I am Rosemary Menkens, the member for Burdekin and chair of the committee. The other committee members who are with me this afternoon are: Mrs Desley Scott, the deputy chair and member for Woodridge; Mr Steve Bennett, the member for Burnett; Mr Mark Boothman, the member for Albert; Mr Michael Latter, the member for Waterford; and Mr Neil Symes, the member for Lytton. The committee has resolved that non-committee members be given leave to attend and ask questions during the hearing, and these will be the members for Inala, Mackay and South Brisbane.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the Hon. Ian Walker, Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. I also welcome to the hearing Mr Andrew Garner, the director-general. I remind all of those participants participating in the hearing today that these proceedings are proceedings of parliament and that the public cannot participate in the proceedings. In this regard I remind members of the public that, under the standing orders, the public may be admitted to, or excluded from, the hearing at the discretion of the chair.

For the benefit of Hansard, I would ask departmental officers to identify themselves before answering a question.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts 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 in relation to your portfolio. I remind you that there is a time limit of three minutes for such a statement.

Mr WALKER: It is certainly my pleasure to be here at the estimates hearing for my department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. The components of this portfolio are intrinsically linked: they all require lateral thinking, forward thinking and creativity. My department is working hard to deliver a strong vision for the future: one where we are creative, connected and clever, one where Queenslanders are getting best value for money.

An example in the science innovation area is our recently announced \$9 million investment in Queensland researchers which goes towards the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research. This is groundbreaking science that will put Queensland researchers at the forefront of the field. The results from this research could have positive impacts for millions of people around the globe. DSITIA is also delivering on a key election commitment to establish the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine. That is an investment of \$42.12 million to combat tropical disease: debilitating conditions like malaria and dengue fever. We are creating campuses in Townsville, Cairns and in the Torres Strait. The potential developments made in disease prevention and cure are enormous.

This government is committed to applying science and innovation for economic success. We know that innovation accounts for over 60 per cent of Australia's long-term productivity growth. That is why we are working hard to remove barriers to business innovation. My department is also working hard to slash red tape and make ICT across government open and accountable like never before. We recently released the ICT strategy, and that is a roadmap for the future and one that will deliver the best and most cost-effective services to Queenslanders. That strategy was shaped by the first ever whole-of-government ICT audit which I was pleased to release earlier this year. This document showed the terrible state of IT, with more than 100 high-risk systems presenting major financial and technical problems. We are looking at ICT as a service, where government no longer needs to own and maintain costly ICT infrastructure. I have also announced a new IT dashboard where all significant government projects, their costs and current status, will be released publicly. That will allow much greater scrutiny and transparency of ICT projects.

We are taking the same transparent approach to the arts. I have recently announced a new arts investment framework that will make it much easier for the arts to access grants. This framework also ensures that Queenslanders know where their taxpayer dollars are going. I was delighted to recently announce that the Queensland Ballet is the first recipient of the Super Star Fund. That is a \$3 million commitment over four years. We have also delivered on our \$3 million boost to touring election commitment and are well on track to double the number of touring productions across regional Queensland. Some examples are: \$150,000 towards the Queensland Ballet's production of *Giselle* touring in Toowoomba, Maryborough, Mackay, Sunshine Coast, Rockhampton and Gladstone; a \$140,000 investment for *Waltzing Our Matilda*, which takes Opera Queensland to Atherton, Ayr, Biloela, Wandoan, Kenilworth, Redcliffe, Goondiwindi, Quilpie, St George and Mundubbera. We are working very hard to make Queensland an arts and cultural hub. Our cultural precinct strategy will see QPAC, the Queensland Museum, QAGOMA and the State Library working together like never before to make the precinct the best in Australia. I am certainly proud of the Newman government's commitment to making Queensland a great state with great opportunity. Madam Chair and committee members, I look forward to our robust discussion this afternoon.

CHAIR: We will start by examining the areas of information technology and shared services. I will begin the block of government questions. I refer to page 4 of the SDS. The Commission of Audit's recommendation 148 looks to have government utilise appropriate cloud based computing as an enabler to complement its ICT as a service strategy, with government email recently announced as the first application to migrate to the cloud. Can the minister give an example of the benefits and potential savings of government adopting cloud based computing services?

Mr WALKER: That was certainly a very important recommendation of the Commission of Audit. To move to ICT as a service which includes cloud based computing will certainly deliver significant benefits to government, particularly in the areas of lower capital equipment expenditure and ongoing maintenance costs of hardware and software assets. The government's adoption of cloud based computing will enable it to transition from mainly internal high-cost customised ICT applications and solutions to lower-cost standard interchangeable services where quality improvements and cost

reductions are driven by highly competitive market forces. It will also allow the government to focus its limited ICT resources on the strategic enablement of better front-line services instead of simply keeping the lights on.

In the particular case about which you asked of cloud computing, the providers achieve economies of scale that are beyond the reach of government agencies. Cloud based computing represents better value for money than internally provided solutions. The time to value for cloud based solutions can be dramatically shortened in many cases. Cloud based solutions have a much reduced requirement for agency owned ICT equipment. Utility service models are available for many cloud based services. You only pay for what you use and when you use it, and maintenance and refresh of ICT systems is part of the cloud service.

Cloud based computing presents the opportunity to reduce vendor lock-in, enable self-service and accelerate innovation and productivity in the delivery of contemporary public services to Queensland's citizens. The cloud based computing approach to the sourcing of ICT functions, similar to that taken by other government jurisdictions—for example, the USA, United Kingdom and New Zealand governments—will require agencies to implement cloud based solutions from accredited suppliers as the default options. We will not always go there, but we will if it is the best way to go. For example, the Queensland government is progressing the adoption of a cloud based email solution. Cloud based email providers represent better value for money than internally provided solutions. It is estimated that up to \$17 million per annum could be saved by migrating all departmental email systems to external cloud providers. Several departments are now in a position to take advantage of these savings, and a panel of qualified suppliers is being established by my department to facilitate agency transitions. The local ICT industry can be involved as cloud solution providers themselves or as local representatives and transition specialists for national and international cloud providers. Agencies will conduct business risk and data sensitivity assessments for the particular ICT systems they wish to move to a cloud based computing environment.

The risk of cloud alternatives should be considered in light of the current ICT risk that the government is presently carrying. Mature cloud service providers have extensive security accreditations and security management processes which undergo regular external audits and scrutiny. Their business viability is crucially dependent on having no material security failures. In many cases, information security will be enhanced by moving ICT systems to mature, well-credentialed cloud computing providers. The acting Queensland Privacy Commissioner has indicated that information privacy concerns which may relate to the cloud can be addressed through appropriate contract terms and conditions.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, I refer to page 5 of the SDS. How is the minister engaging with the ICT industry?

Mr WALKER: I thank the member for that question. It is certainly a great pleasure for me to be able to engage with the ICT industry and to hear their views on how the government should be moving, because it is obviously imperative that our government continues to establish effective working relationships with the industry as well as with other external ICT stakeholders and interest groups. Indeed, industry engagement was the key to the development of the ICT strategy that I recently released to the public.

That strategy delivers a vision of the future of ICT in the Queensland government and it will lead the ICT reform agenda across government. It was informed by feedback received from industry groups. We put the proposal up on the web and, in all, over 500 submissions from a wide range of stakeholders in the ICT industry were considered. This feedback profoundly influenced the final strategy as we acted to refocus and transform the ways in which the Queensland government utilises ICT. It was followed up, I must say, by a half-day seminar over at the State Library where we actually had a great number of ICT professionals come across and talk to us about the draft document.

In order to maintain the consistent and meaningful industry engagement that is essential in driving ICT reform across the public sector, I have ongoing individual meetings with numerous industry executives and company representatives to discuss their organisation's specific offerings. I engage with a wide range of stakeholders regardless of their organisation's size, whether it be Fujitsu, Data#3 or a single-person company. The ICT industry, like most other industries, is also made up of several associations which represent specific segments of the IT industry and community. When possible, I accept their offers to attend their events. They are associations like the Australian Information Industry Association—AIIA—and the Australian Computer Society. While there are formal elements, there is also time to meet with those in attendance. I have also attended individual

associations' board meetings. I find these opportunities provide me with a chance to hear their issues, while allowing me to give them direct feedback on what the government is thinking. Another way I engage with the ICT industry is through various government organised ICT industry forums which support ongoing collaboration and information sharing. One of those was the one I spoke about on 13 June over at the State Library. Just three months earlier in April I spent half a day with members of the industry at the government's Opening the Vault event at the State Library. That was the one that had to do with the open data proposals. Both of these forums were very successful and well attended by industry members and many of my departmental staff. I was very grateful for that.

In the coming months there will be more of these discussions as part of the government's ICT action plan and the broader ICT renewal agenda. Equally, there are specific ICT industry organised events like a June IT forum on the Gold Coast where I presented on government directions in ICT. Later this year I plan to hold a series of discussions with ICT subject matter experts in various specific categories like small to medium businesses, major vendor start-ups, incubators, research universities and so on. In that way I can test ideas and strategies directly with the people who are impacted.

I have established an ICT engagement group consisting of key industry figures, and I might speak a little later about that. Departmental executives and I have been meeting with them semiformaly on a monthly basis. That gives a brief summary and overview of how I am engaging with the industry.

Mr BENNETT: I refer to page 4 of the SDS. What is the department doing to give effect to the government's contestability reform agenda following the Commission of Audit's recommendation for corporate services?

Mr WALKER: I thank the member for Burnett for that question. He knows, I am sure, that the contestability recommendations within the Commission of Audit's report were very important ones for the government, and my department certainly has adopted those recommendations and is moving forward on them.

We are proactively engaged in delivering the contestability reform agenda and my department has a strong commitment to high-quality and value-for-money service outcomes that are compatible with the recommendations by the independent Commission of Audit. The contestability reform agenda will increase my department's skills to operate in a range of competitive market environments based on value-for-money assessments. DSITIA provides enabling services that allow other departments to focus on the essential task of front-line service delivery. We understand the importance of getting corporate services right and we are seeking the outcomes that drive efficiency, innovation and quality. Four out of the five recommendations pertaining to departmental corporate services have direct impacts for my department and we are working through these recommendations in a systemic and considered manner. Specifically, the recommendations removing the mandate for provision of centralised corporate service functions through Queensland Shared Services is well underway. My department is developing an implementation plan that establishes an orderly process to manage the implications of this recommendation, which effectively means that departments are no longer required to use Shared Services but may if they wish to do so.

Notwithstanding this work, we are also actioning the recommendation to empower Queensland Shared Services to offer services to agencies on a contestable basis and in a very competitive market. The first services to be subject to contestability in DSITIA are mail services and shared finance and human resource payroll services currently provided to the rest of the government's cluster of departments. The next step in this work involves the release of an expression of interest for the provision of mail services and an invitation to offer seeking engagement of an industry partner to assist in determination of a potential future business and service delivery model for Queensland Shared Services, and these will be released to the market during this month. In the next six months my department will also assess options for ERP as a service for finance and payroll systems on behalf of the rest of government departments. This has particular relevance to the Commission of Audit recommendation as accepted by the government relating to the discontinuation of its role of owner and manager of significant ICT assets and systems. This strategy will not only reform the sector but avoid any potential ICT debacles like the implementation of the Queensland Health payroll system. We are working with the ICT industry to deliver quality results and my department has already engaged with market leaders to gather intelligence and understand potential options in relation to these services. By taking a collaborative approach and bringing the private and public sectors together, we are drawing on the strengths of both sectors and devising optimal value-for-money solutions.

The contestability agenda for services delivered through DSITIA will be assessed in conjunction with the recommendations of the independent Commission of Audit. This includes our own corporate services, including internal audit and workforce capability and development. We are currently benchmarking our activity against best practice to make a determination about potential future delivery options. Further, the contestability agenda for the Science Delivery Division is underway and will be progressed in parallel to the other contestability assessments. Through this work, my department is committed to getting the state back on track and delivering quality and value-for-money results for government departments and for all Queenslanders.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We will now move to the non-government questioning block. I call on the member for Mackay.

Mr MULHERIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, your predecessor last year refused to answer whether she was the minister with whole-of-government responsibility for IT. I ask you today whether you are the minister responsible for all IT projects in this government.

Mr WALKER: I thank the member for that question. It is an important one, and it has in fact come to our attention in a very pointed way as we address the ICT audit and the Costello report recommendations. There is no doubt that in relation to the provision of ICT the strategy plan that we have developed—the plan for government ICT—has been prepared to provide a very considered approach and holistic approach to reform the way that government currently utilises ICT and it describes how ICT is going to be used and transformed to deliver better service outcomes for Queenslanders.

Mr MULHERIN: Are you responsible for all IT projects?

Mr WALKER: Accountability for ICT investment is clear as a result of that document and it will rest with the relevant department's director-general. Significant and at-risk ICT investments will be reported by agencies through a director-general council and then through me to cabinet. The governance arrangements about that, including the structure and the process, now ensure that outcomes to improve service delivery are met and the required outcomes are going to be clear and documented in the investment business case. You will see, if I can the address the member for Mackay's question specifically, that in the strategy document that we put out—I think it is page 5—it actually shows in a diagrammatic way the way in which this is going to be handled. So, in broad terms, my department will set the standards for IT service and acquisition and matters that go to cabinet will have to come through my director-general and through me to go to cabinet and receive our input at the level of cabinet decision.

In respect of whole-of-government or high-risk projects—and the definitions for those will appear more precisely in the implementation plan—those matters will be the responsibility of my department. In respect of departmental acquisitions of matters that relate to their own business, that will be from that department's budget and run by that department but will be overseen by the director-general council, and that is a body that already exists. Any IT component of that council and any decisions it makes will be chaired at that point by my director-general, who will take the lead in those matters. So I think the best word for it is a federated model. My department will certainly take the lead, but we do not know the best solution for the business of each individual department and there is a role for that department to satisfy its business needs as it thinks best.

Mr MULHERIN: Given recommendation 152 in the Costello report where it basically says that it is up to the individual agencies and their DGs, so overall no-one has specific accountability; the accountability will vary depending on the risk? So if it is higher risk you wear the responsibility for the failures or the successes?

Mr WALKER: Correct.

Mr MULHERIN: How do you determine higher risk? Is it a monetary value?

Mr WALKER: At the moment we have only set that in that phrase, but we do intend to clarify that in the implementation plan and we are presently working on what those parameters will be. But the broader statement you made earlier is correct: the high-risk ones will be—

Mr MULHERIN: With you.

Mr WALKER: Yes, with us. But we will not be stepping aside from the obligation to ensure that the ones that are handled by the departments are also in line with a whole-of-government policy. If I can just say that an important part of that is going to be the ICT dashboard in that transparency and that responsibility and the need to perform. So the ICT dashboard will be a way in which people can go online—anybody, any individual citizen, any department—and see how projects are performing

against budget and against time, so there will be red lights, amber lights and green lights as to how they are going. You will be able to click below that and find how they are going, and that is meant to ensure that something like the Health payroll system cannot happen again. While it does not mean that every project will be delivered on time and on budget—it cannot mean that—it does mean that we will be able to see how they are going and alarm bells will ring early and very transparently.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, what will happen if there is a dispute between your agency and a particular line agency regarding a decision to develop a particular IT system? If the agency and the minister both support the progress of the new system but you and your department oppose it, who will win out in that situation?

Mr WALKER: I might ask my director-general just to take you through what the process will be. But certainly in setting the broad parameters, at the end if my department does not tick off on it there will certainly be the ability to go to cabinet and have it resolved at that point. But the norm will be it will need to be approved by my department and my director-general.

Mr MULHERIN: Would the matters not—

CHAIR: Excuse me, member for Mackay, but your questions are somewhat hypothetical, so I would—

Mr MULHERIN: I do not think so, Madam Chair. This relates to accountability in government relating to the SDS at page 4. I am having a conversation with the minister in relation to this federated model that he aptly described. The question I want to get back to is not all things would go to cabinet, only ones that you mentioned earlier of higher risk. Will all IT procurement go to cabinet?

Mr WALKER: I have answered your question in broad terms. I will ask my director-general, Mr Garner, to respond in more detail.

Mr Garner: Thank you for the question. Certainly, the question around our department providing input and advice will not just wait for the final submission to cabinet or CBRC, as it may be. We are currently in the process of finalising initially a checklist to allow us to, in essence, rate the project in terms of risk from one to four, four being the highest. We will consider items such as the cost of the system, the alignment with the strategy—getting to your point around what if it is not in the strategy—if the system is going to go to support, and importantly the impact on people and service delivery as well if there is a system failure. So those risk factors will actually contribute to identifying our department's role. Certainly, the higher the risk the greater role our department will have. In relation to advising CBRC or cabinet, the process is very much to engage with the department from day one. We do not want to get to a situation where a submission comes to us the week before and we are running around, so very much our process is to engage with the department from day one to understand the approach process, the options being considered, the benefits et cetera. That allows us to minimise the risk of disagreement by the time it gets escalated. There could no doubt be at some point in the future a difference of opinion on a fact around a business case, for example. As such, we—as we do now—have the ability to provide that input in a submission to CBRC and cabinet, and that will obviously be considered by the government of the day.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, despite talking about restoring the accountability, the federated model does not really clear up who is responsible for what, and I refer to page 5 of that document which states that the agency will still be responsible for a range of IT projects and for purchasing services but your department will be responsible for other projects and purchases. What will you be responsible for if individual agencies are still responsible for a range of IT projects in their departments?

Mr WALKER: Firstly, I do not agree with you that it does not set clear lines of accountability; I think it does. Having said that, it is not a black-and-white model, and I do not think it should be. It needs some subtleties built into it. I believe we have the balance right with our broad responsibility and responsibility for high-risk and whole-of-government matters and then the departments being responsible within a framework set by us for their own business cases. The problem—and I am sure you are aware of it from your own time in government—is that one department cannot know the needs of all other departments and it would be unwise, I believe, for us to become such a centralised and directive agency that other departments would not have the right to assess their own business needs properly. So the reason that we are setting it up in this way is that we want that to happen, but we do not want it to happen outside a framework set by my department. So I will agree with you that there is a nice balance there, but I think it is an important balance and one that will work

appropriately. An example of a whole-of-government matter in which we will be responsible is of course the cloud email systems which I referred to earlier. I do not know if the director-general has anything further to add.

Mr Garner: Certainly, just picking up from the minister's comments, our department and minister are clearly responsible for the portfolio reporting of all ICT renewal initiatives to cabinet on a six-monthly basis but we are doing that on a monthly basis—and certainly that is the concept of the ICT dashboard. So we will be responsible for the portfolio reporting in relation to the ICT program, as the minister said, certainly on the whole-of-government initiatives such as the email but also such concepts as the One Government Network. Importantly, the alignment to the strategy is very much the responsibility of our department. Another example is very much around the project or program assurance on those high-risk projects. For those high-risk projects, we will take a lead role in the project assurance to ensure that they are on track and that there are independent checks to ensure that the agency is delivering to its milestones.

Mr MULHERIN: Through the minister to the director-general, with high risk have you done much work around what is a dollar value that you would consider high risk? I think it was Oxford or Cambridge that recently released a report that states that well over 20 per cent of IT projects in excess of \$6 million normally fail or blow out in costs. That is why we are trying to pin you down on the accountability.

Mr Garner: Certainly. We had to also ensure that we were not overloaded with projects that did not require our attention, so we are starting with a figure of \$2 million and above.

Mr MULHERIN: \$2 million?

Mr Garner: That is right. That is one of the contributing factors to the risk; it is not the only contributing factor to the risk. It is a score card as such, but certainly \$2 million and above is a key factor. It is not just—and this is where it can lead to some of the issues that you spoke about—the individual cost of the project itself. What we also look to consider is not just the direct cost of, for example, \$2 million but the potential flow-on costs of other related systems.

Mr MULHERIN: Could the role of IT minister and the role of the department be better fulfilled by a minister and a department with a specialist focus on procurement, such as the Queensland Government Procurement Office and the Minister for Housing and Public Works?

Mr WALKER: Is that directed to me?

Mr MULHERIN: Yes.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. Look, I don't think so. I mean, clearly, I suppose, stepping back a bit and looking at the broader role of the department, as I said in my opening statement, there is something very important that links IT and arts and science and innovation. They are not just lumped together with commas and ands between them. They do have a common focus of where Queensland is going in the future and I think it is very important to keep those together. So I don't think there is any lack of focus on what we need to do in ICT. Certainly we regard that very highly. There is no doubt that in relation to your question about procurement as we develop the implementation plan procurement will shift more towards my department, and that is going to be an important change as a result of the new structure that we are seeing.

Mr MULHERIN: That will happen? The procurement function from Housing and Public Works will shift across to your department, Minister?

Mr WALKER: That's right. That has already begun. What is called the Procurement Transformation Program will transition that arrangement and as part of that DSITIA is going to be the category lead for what is called the megaspending—I suppose the big project we are talking about—category of ICT so there will be a shift in that regard.

Mr MULHERIN: I am pleased you highlighted that. I wasn't trying to downgrade your role. I know you take your portfolio very seriously.

Mr WALKER: I was very protective of those other areas.

CHAIR: Thank you. That brings this section to an end and I will now call on the member for Lytton.

Mr SYMES: I refer to page 5 of the SDS. What has the government done to address accountability and decision making around ICT investments?

Mr WALKER: I thank the member for that question. It has certainly been a big part of what I have been thinking about and involved with since coming to this role in February. One of the significant achievements I believe of the department during that time has been the development of

our ICT Strategy 2013-2017 which was publicly released on 5 July 2013. That strategy outlines a vision of a transformed Public Service that is focused on improving services for Queenslanders by better use of and analysis of government data and by using modern, cost-efficient technology. The strategy also provides a considered and holistic approach to reform the way that government currently utilises ICT. That strategy incorporates the findings and recommendations of the ICT Audit 2012, which is the biggest audit of IT ever done in Queensland's history, the Commission of Audit—or the Costello audit—and the Public Sector Renewal Program recommendations. That now forms a sound basis for the government to move forward with the task of driving ICT reform.

New government arrangements to drive this implementation are now established to ensure that ICT effectively supports the government's business needs in a risk managed way that provides long-term value for money. As a result of the reform effort, the Queensland government's approach to the management of significant and at-risk ICT investments will change substantially now that the recently approved Queensland government ICT management framework is in place. This is largely along the lines that I mentioned when answering the member for Mackay's question. Under this framework significant ICT investments will require ministerial endorsement before funds are allocated. This is to ensure consistency with the government's ICT direction and to ensure that necessary risk management arrangements are in place. As part of the process, ICT investments will be subject to scheduled decision points to assess programs and progress and the ongoing viability of the investment business case.

Accountability for ICT investment will be clear and will rest with the relevant department's director-general. Significant and at-risk ICT investments will be regularly reported by agencies through the director-general council and then via the minister to cabinet. Governance arrangements which include structure and process will ensure that outcomes to improve service delivery are met. The required outcomes will be clear and documented in the investment business case. Further, individual ministers, of course supported by their directors-general, will be accountable for the success of agency specific initiatives, for the implementation of the ICT reform agenda within their agency and for complying with the government's ICT risk management and project assurance processes. The new ICT management framework now in place removes many of the difficulties experienced with previous high-risk projects such as the health payroll debacle and other ICT investments such as identity directory and email services and ICT consolidation.

In addition to this government's reform, my department is leading the way with other accountability measures in relation to major ICT projects and that includes the development of the DSITIA portfolio dashboard. That dashboard—and I believe my own department's will be ready for release fairly soon—will increase the availability of information about major ICT initiatives. But while my department will be the first to go out and show its wares, it will be right across government that this reporting will be required to be done. Now, that is a new transparent process and data about each major ICT initiative will be available for publication, including high-level overviews, vendor involvement, status reporting on cost, time, quality and overall portfolio status. Explanations of the status of projects that might not be fully achieving its milestones will be listed on the dashboard, so you will be able to see them, meaning that there will no longer be anywhere to hide in relation to delivering significant and high-risk ICT initiatives. I always think had this applied to the health payroll system the speedo would have been going around like a fan as to performance against time and money. While, as I said before, there is no guarantee any program won't slip against those, this means that not only the departments that are putting them into effect but also the contractors who are part of the deal will have their performance transparently there before any member of the public who wants to have a look.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I call on the member for Waterford?

Mr LATTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, welcome. Minister, it is a priority of this government to reduce red tape. I draw your attention to page 11 of the SDS and my question to you is what is your department doing to contribute to the reduction of red tape?

Mr WALKER: I thank the member for that question. I know he is often on about this issue of red tape. It is one that is close to his heart. I struck that in my previous role as Assistant Minister for Planning Reform and I am pleased to see you carrying the torch continually, Mr Latter. My department is certainly committed to playing its part in achieving the Queensland government's election commitment of a 20 per cent reduction in the burden of regulation in Queensland by 2018. Several of our ICT initiatives that are currently in progress are contributing toward meeting our proposed reduction targets. Firstly, the Public Sector Renewal Board review into strategic sourcing. Under that the Department of Housing and Public Works has begun the Procurement Transformation

Program, the one I mentioned in response to the member for Mackay, that will transition the Queensland government to a centre-led procurement policy model. DSITIA is playing a vital role in that program as the category lead for the spend category of ICT. One of the first initiatives begun was the consolidation of government wide focused resources and contract arrangements within my department where appropriate. What does that mean? A practical example of that activity is the standardising and simplifying of whole-of-government ICT contracts to remove unnecessary administrative overheads such as the two per cent administration charge in the X.TEN series of contracts, those standing offer arrangements that all agencies had with CITEC for ICT products and requirements. It is estimated that agencies will save up to \$400,000 by our cutting of this needless red tape.

Other planned activities to reform ICT procurement involve the review of the GITC framework, investment governance and the review of intellectual property provisions. The review of the GITC framework in particular, and its practical application to ICT as a service direction, is expected to further reduce red tape and to produce streamlined processes as a result. My department is also reducing red tape by revitalising customer service delivery in the form of progressing the one-stop shop access to government services for Queensland. Now, this is an important model, the one-stop shop model, to give improved customer service as an election commitment for this government. The final plan was delivered to government in December 2012. That was reported in the government's six-month action plan for that period.

The plan was developed with the participation of all Queensland government departments and options to commence implementation this year are currently being considered by government. A range of costed options for a one-stop shop are being considered and they will pave the way for delivery of government services that are better value for money and in tune with what Queenslanders want and expect. I view the one-stop approach as generating significant benefits and opportunities for government by delivering efficiencies and savings through service improvements by providing more and more services online and reducing duplication of effort. Work already completed by my department in achieving these improvements has delivered tangible benefits and savings, for example, by establishing the one core phone number, 13 QGOV, through which Queenslanders can access a range of government services and information with just one phone call. Through that we have significantly reduced the amount of publicly advertised government phone numbers in the 2012-13 editions of the Brisbane White Pages. We have made it simpler for people to find how to get to government quickly. By consolidating entries in the White Pages in this way we have not only ensured that information on government services is more easily accessed by the public, but it is forecast we will save as much as \$2 million approximately in advertising expenditure savings every year.

CHAIR: I refer to page 4 of the SDS. You have given us quite a good introduction there. What is the minister's plan for delivering the government's election commitment around the one-stop shop and how do you see that improving the customer's experience of interacting with the Queensland government?

Mr WALKER: It is an important question and I am glad to amplify on it even though I touched on it in the last question. As I said in that answer, my department is responsible for delivering the one-stop shop election commitment and I am doing that in partnership with the Premier through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. That involves the investigation and delivery of a genuine one-stop shop solution. We are basing that on a couple of existing successful models. The Brisbane City Council is I think regarded as performing well in that area and the New York model, the NYC 311 model, is also another great model upon which we can learn and base some of this development. My department has investigated both of those models, as well as a range of other one-stop shop models across the world. The UK and Canada have got similar models and within Australia there are similar arrangements in South Australia, Tasmania, Canberra and New South Wales.

Based on the results of those investigations and extensive consultation with all of the Queensland government agencies we have delivered a plan for one-stop shop access to Queensland government services in accordance with the six-month plan that I referred to, the one that concluded in December 2012. That plan, along with options to commence implementation this year, is currently being considered by the government so unfortunately I can't share the final Queensland government one-stop shop solution and the approach we are going to take in full with you today. But I can say that the initiative is going to take the concept much further than any previous Queensland initiatives in this area such as the former Access Queensland and the current integrated service provider Smart

Service Queensland. A range of costed options for a one-stop shop solution have been developed and they are going to pave the way for delivery of government services that are indeed better value for money and in tune with what Queenslanders want and expect.

What I can also share with you are some of the core underlying principles and features of a one-stop shop approach which are aimed at ensuring that customers have an improved and positive experience when interacting with the Queensland government. The underlying principles are these: that government can improve the service experience by listening to and meeting customers'—that is, individuals and businesses—expectations and that government can reduce delivery costs through channel optimisation—in other words, getting people to go to the right channel: telephone or internet—and process improvement. The government's aim is to deliver simpler and easier access to government services for all of our customers, be they online services, phone services or actual attendance at the counter. We want to improve customer service by making it easier to find the services by providing a responsive service 24 hours a day, by making it seamless so that customers don't have to separately contact a whole stack of departments or repeat their information or inquiry, to provide consistent information and the right answer and to provide a joined-up service while still respecting customer choice and privacy. We see that one-stop shop approach as generating significant benefits and opportunities for government by delivering efficiencies and savings through service improvements by providing more and more services online and reducing duplication of effort.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That will draw to a close the government's block of questions. I now call on the member for Mackay.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, I refer you to the government's response to Costello report recommendation No. 149, which is to sell CITEC within two years. I note that the government has accepted this recommendation. How many jobs will be lost as a result of the sale of CITEC to the private sector?

Mr WALKER: That is an important question and, as you indicated, sir, the Commission of Audit recommendation Nos 147, 149, 150 and 151 have all been accepted by the government. They will have an impact on CITEC and its current business model. The recommendations state that CITEC services are to be transitioned to ICT as a service and that we divest CITEC within two years. The report also recommended that agencies implement a program to divest ICT assets and systems, transitioning their own services to whatever the new service model is. The first thing is that we have acknowledged that a detailed implementation plan is needed to, first and foremost, establish an orderly process to manage the implications of the recommendation. We do understand that we cannot just do it overnight.

Mr MULHERIN: How many jobs?

Mr WALKER: Since July 2012, the new arrangements, including the appointment of a new general manager and supporting transformation team, were implemented to get CITEC into a more sustainable form. In relation to the transition from thereon, I might ask my deputy director-general, who is looking after that, Andrew Spina, to fill you in further on the specifics of that. Andrew will need to come up to the table.

Mr Spina: Can I go through the question again. I am looking to identify the number of—

Mr MULHERIN: Jobs that will go from CITEC.

Mr Spina: There has been no decision for staff to go within CITEC. If we actually look at the Service Delivery Statements, we have identified a reduction in staff for the next financial year, which represents a movement of corporate resources and a movement of resources from the Chief Technology Office to a number of 430. That is our predicted number at this point in time. There has been no decision to change the staffing numbers within CITEC. As we have pointed out, there has been a government decision to look at divestment for CITEC. Depending on what the outcomes of that review are, then we would obviously be considering what other options there would be and what would need to occur with staff overall.

Mr MULHERIN: When will that review be finalised?

Mr Spina: There is a review being undertaken at the moment. I cannot pre-empt cabinet decisions, but I expect that a review will be finalised within two months.

Mr MULHERIN: Thank you. Minister, there are up to 5,000 government workers in the ICT areas across government. You have created considerable uncertainty about who will be staying and who will be losing their jobs. Are you able to clarify here and now how many IT jobs will be axed from government?

Mr WALKER: Thanks for that question. I can clarify that the overall strategy that the government is embarking upon will clearly mean more IT services to be provided to government over time. The IT services being provided are not going to get less—if you went back 20 years and I am sure it will be a similar thing looking forward 20 years—in terms of the amount of ICT services government requires. The first thing to be said is that a lot of people will be working in IT and providing service to the government.

The second thing is that it is clear, as a result of the recommendations of the Costello audit and of the ICT audit, that more and more of those jobs will be provided in the private sector than in the government sector. That will be a broad transition. It will not be something that happens overnight and it is not going to be possible to put numbers on that. Clearly, the welfare of our staff will be foremost and discussions with them and their unions will obviously take place as we make that transition. I think my main message is that this is good news for people in the IT game. The government is not going to shut up shop and stop using IT. There will be a lot of IT jobs to provide a lot of services that will be used by government.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, with the sale of CITEC will jobs go offshore as a result of outsourcing IT services?

Mr WALKER: As Mr Spina said in his answer to you before, we are still looking at the model that we will use in order to get CITEC ready for going out of government. It is not clear at all yet what that model will be. We need to say that it is obviously in the government's interests to keep CITEC and make CITEC as strong as possible before any such transition happens. Certainly the focus that we have at the moment is ensuring that CITEC stays in a strong formidable manner, because, to put it bluntly, that will be the most attractive for someone who might want to take that service out of government. Therefore, there is a strong commitment to ensuring that CITEC is kept in that form. If I used the phrase 'sell CITEC', I did not mean that. There is no decision to sell CITEC. The decision is for CITEC to move out of government, but quite how that happens is yet to be determined.

Mr MULHERIN: The Costello recommendation is to sell. You are saying that may not be the case?

Mr WALKER: I think the actual word used is 'divest'. The question might be quite how we do it. I was loose in my language if I said—

Mr MULHERIN: Divest, close it down or sell it—

Mr WALKER: Again, it is a sensitive commercial issue to go into, but no doubt there is a need to look at CITEC, if we are to divest ourselves of CITEC, to find out how best to do that in the interests of CITEC and in the interests of Queenslanders, so that needs some thought.

Mr MULHERIN: We can be assured that we will not have CITEC in two years?

Mr WALKER: That is correct.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, earlier you mentioned cloud based technology. There was a recent report that Telstra will outsource to India 170 jobs from its network applications and service division, which provides cloud based services to businesses. Minister, if you are outsourcing jobs to an Australian or Queensland based company, will you be able to guarantee that they will remain here or will they end up in India?

Mr WALKER: Moving to the cloud always involves an issue of security. I think I mentioned that in my opening statement or in answer to one of the questions. The first thing that has to be considered in that context is that staying where we are at the moment involves a security risk, because we have a large number of systems—old systems, various systems, some of them not with up-to-date security systems. That is only going to get worse if we continue to do our own. Moving to the cloud gives us a chance to move to a provider that can provide up-to-date security as we do that. We will take security as a key issue in any decision that we make to outsource and get IT as a service. That can be done in a number of ways, including the quality of the provider and the various contractual terms that go with that. I might ask Mr Garner to address that issue, because we have discussed it at length and I know it is close to his heart as well.

Mr Garner: Mr Mulherin, I believe your focus was on offshoring; is that correct?

Mr MULHERIN: Yes. If a company meets all the security requirements and ticks all the boxes for the outsourced model, what is to stop that company from outsourcing to India?

Mr Garner: Certainly, first and foremost, definitely there has been no decision made to offshore any work at the current moment. That question will obviously come up during the procurement process. The government will identify its priorities and its objectives under the procurement process, and that is how that will be judged. That will be part of that procurement process.

Certainly, we do not see that, I will use the phrase, 'tier 1'—so the global system integrators or SIs—are the only providers that can work in this space. As the minister touched on earlier, we are actually looking at software as a service and infrastructure as a service cloud actually to make the local SMB business, and we are actively encouraging SMBs to work with themselves, to team, and also to work with the globals to provide solutions that we need here within Queensland. It will be part of the procurement process.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, are you prepared to place restrictions or conditions on the outsourcing to ensure that the jobs that are outsourced remain in Queensland?

Mr WALKER: I will keep the health of the small to medium local industry—in fact, all of local industry, as some of our industry is bigger than small to medium—paramount in my decision. Beyond that, the decision I have to make is that Queenslanders get the best value for money for their IT and the best service with that. Each decision will be on its own account and they will be two parameters that will be at the front of my mind.

Mr MULHERIN: So you cannot rule out that some jobs could be outsourced overseas?

Mr WALKER: The key things for me will be value for money for Queenslanders getting the right service and support for our local industry.

Mr MULHERIN: With value for money and support for local industry, you may not get value for money and you go down the other path. Will you rule it out today that there will not be any jobs outsourced overseas?

CHAIR: Member for Mackay, how relevant to the budget is that question, bearing in mind it is an opinion that you have been expressing?

Mr MULHERIN: Madam Chair, with all due respect, in his opening statement the minister made a lot of the changing role of government and particularly ICT services being outsourced, that there will be a lot more jobs created in IT, although probably not in government; they will be in the private sector. This comes to the crux of the issue around the government's reducing the unemployment target to around four per cent. Therefore, these questions are relevant to this estimates process.

Mr WALKER: Relevant or not, I am certainly happy to answer it. There is no doubt that the issue that the member raised is very important in this sense: there are a lot of members of the local industry who come to see me wanting to know if there is a role for them in the future. The answer is yes. The local small to mediums have plenty of advantages. No. 1: they are just down the road, which is a good start. No. 2: they are nimble and innovative, which is a good start. I think there is no need to have a siege mentality about the services that small to mediums will supply to us. I think they will be significant. As I said, my primary responsibility is to get value for money in the provision of IT services for this government and for Queenslanders. That will be first. That will be followed by a desire to keep a lively local industry. I am quite sure that the government's policies will achieve both of those things.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, I refer to the Costello report and recommendation No. 150, which is for the government to discontinue its role as an owner and manager of significant ICT assets and systems, and also to implement a program to divest ICT assets and systems, with required ICT services to be purchased under contractual arrangements with private providers. I note that this recommendation has been accepted. What IT assets are being referred to and what is being considered for sale?

Mr WALKER: The recommendation was certainly a broad one and the government is taking it in that light. One thing I should say, however, is that it does not mean that everything will be sold or, more importantly, that everything will be sold or divested overnight. I will ask Mr Spina to talk a bit about how that recommendation is being approached.

Mr Spina: If I just repeat the question to myself, can you correct it if necessary? It was: what other ICT assets are we looking at—

Mr MULHERIN: In the Costello report, what are the assets being referred to and what is being considered for sale?

Mr Spina: I think the minister indicated that they were not necessarily being considered for sale. The assets that are being referred to are those that have been identified within the ICT audit itself. That report undertook an extensive audit, which looked at the hardware and software assets

that government currently owns and manages, and made recommendations that were consistent with the Costello audit that the management of those assets is unsustainable and also made recommendations that they are locking government into outdated business processes.

The move away from owning those assets is to move towards ICT as a service. The approach which is being used in moving to ICT as a service is essentially about putting contractual arrangements in place. In some cases it does not mean selling those assets but transitioning from an owned model of software and hardware to procuring that as a service. That can involve a transition process. It is likely to take a number of years.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, so the audits identified the assets. Will you be able to provide the committee with an itemised list including the name of the asset and the purpose, which department an asset belongs to and what the value is?

Mr WALKER: I have to say, member for Mackay, I am not sure whether that is possible. If it is, we will certainly do so. I will take that on the notice with that rider.

Mr MULHERIN: I appreciate that. The departmental officer said they have already identified it in an audit. I would appreciate that.

CHAIR: It is now 4.30 pm so we will move to science and innovation questions. I call the member for Albert.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS. How is the government strengthening Queensland's relationship with China's peak research organisation the Chinese Academy of Sciences to achieve outcomes for Queensland science?

Mr WALKER: Thank you for that question. The government is certainly very keen to strengthen scientific collaboration, including research and commercialisation opportunities, with China. To that end, the government has been closely engaged with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which is China's peak scientific research organisation.

An interesting fact that I picked up when I was over there earlier this year is that the Queensland government is the only subnational government in the world to have a jointly funded collaborative research program with the Chinese Academy of Sciences. They deal with the top tier of government—the federal government here. Queensland is the only subnational government which has such a deal. I think that is a tribute to our industry. I must say it is a tribute to the previous government in terms of some of the feelers it put out in their time to achieve this.

I was in China in April on a trade mission on the behalf of the Treasurer. I was able to mix in some science visits. I met with Professor Xu, the Director-General of the Bureau of Life Sciences and Biotechnology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. It was a lovely lunch meeting. During our meeting Professor Xu and I both agreed on the value of the strategic science and technology collaboration agreement that has existed between Queensland and the academy. We agreed to work together to renew that agreement.

As a further recognition of our support for that relationship I am pleased to announce today that the Queensland government has agreed to commit a further \$500,000 over two years to fund collaborative research projects by Queensland and Chinese scientists. We are currently working to finalise a contribution from the Chinese to foster collaborative scientific research projects in areas with the potential to deliver real benefits for Queensland. They are areas in which we have strengths—things like agricultural biotechnology, including food security, human health and medical research and energy.

The Queensland-Chinese Academy of Sciences relationship has so far supported a number of high-calibre projects, including a major water pollution study by Griffith University and Wuhan Botanical Garden. The fund has also supported a project undertaken by the University of Queensland and the CAS Institute of Biophysics which is investigating the effects of, of all things, different magnetic fields on the biological function and development of the body and the brain. It was an interesting discussion that I had with Professor Xu about this collaboration with, I think it is, Professor Perry Bartlett at the University of Queensland.

They are studying the effect of the earth's magnetic field on our brains. It is very difficult to know how you would do that or why you would do it. Limited research has been done on animals. It was already known that the earth's magnetic field was a great magnetic conductor and compass for animals in finding their way around the world. It is clear that if brains are shielded from the earth's magnetic field they actually lose capacity, particularly memory and cognition. There is some sort of relationship. It is great to see our universities at the forefront of such interesting research.

Another project being undertaken between the University of Queensland and the Shanghai Institutes for Biological Sciences has identified a new class of drugs that can reduce tumour growth in an animal model of oral cancer. That is currently the world's sixth most common cancer. Griffith University and the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden have also received funding through this program. That is to conduct comprehensive monitoring of biodiversity in forests in Queensland and in Yunnan in China. The findings of this work are being used to develop a tool kit that will help us detect the impacts of future climate change on biodiversity.

I am pleased to announce the new funding of \$500,000. It will help to strengthen our existing relationship with the Chinese Academy of Sciences and provide the opportunity to nurture new collaborative partnerships between Queensland and Chinese scientists and to deliver future economic, social and environmental benefits both for Queensland and for China.

CHAIR: I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: I refer to page 5 of the SDS. How is the government supporting research into disorders affecting ageing Queenslanders such as dementia?

Mr WALKER: It is an interesting question. Certainly the ageing population is one of the key long-term fiscal and social challenges facing Queensland. There are growing numbers of older Queenslanders. That means an increasing prevalence of disorders that affect many older people. For example, unless we find effective treatments and prevention strategies for dementia there could be more than 200,000 Queenslanders with dementia by 2050. That is going to place a tremendous burden on the health and aged-care system and on the families of dementia patients.

That is why the Newman government is providing \$9 million, allocated in the last budget, over five years towards the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research at the University of Queensland. That is a foundation investment in the new centre which will fast-track key discoveries and, at the same time, position the centre to leverage substantial additional funding from Australian government programs as well as philanthropic groups.

The Queensland government's funding will be focused in areas where it can make the most difference—namely, in the commercial and clinical development of new discoveries and in supporting the development of new dementia researchers and clinicians. For me the key thing, particularly as innovation minister as well as science minister, is funding these institutes where there are smart people already working because it will attract smart brains from elsewhere. Once they have come here and sampled the Queensland lifestyle they rarely go.

The need for research based activities like this is great. Presently there is no simple test to determine if someone has dementia. This means that a diagnosis of dementia cannot be confirmed until around 10 years after the commencement of symptoms in many cases. That is obviously a tremendously long delay if dementia is to be dealt with. Additionally, there is no verified way of preventing dementia or halting its progress once established or reversing it.

The centre for ageing dementia research is tackling all of these pressing needs. With the leadership of world-renowned neuroscientist Professor Jurgen Gotz and the firepower of the Queensland Brain Institute, it is already making inroads. That will now be significantly accelerated. I was very pleased to go out there and visit the institute. What is being done there is quite dramatic. You really get the sense that they are on the verge of significant breakthroughs.

The interactions will help to ensure the centre's research is directly relevant to the clinical needs. All in all, that will provide a ready pathway for the translation of research findings into clinical practice—that is the important thing for Queenslanders—developing benefits for patients and easing the burden on the health system. At the end of the day, the goal is to help dementia patients. Through this initiative Queensland dementia patients and their families can have greater hope, more information and potentially the opportunity to participate in clinical trials as well as ultimately significant improvement in their health. The Newman government is determined that its science funding in this area delivers improved health outcomes for ageing Queenslanders while at the same time attracting smart, young, effective researchers to Queensland.

CHAIR: I call the member for the Lytton.

Mr SYMES: I refer to page 5 of the SDS. Could the minister please describe the innovative approach his scientists have developed for reducing red tape and facilitating wastewater compliance by industry under the Environmental Protection Act 1994?

Mr WALKER: I thank the member for Lytton for that question. Talking about visits to institutes, actually visiting our scientists at the centre at Boggo Road was a fantastic introduction for me. I had not been there before. I could see what is being done.

The Wastewater Tracking and Electric Reporting System, with the convenient acronym WaTERS, has been developed by my department on behalf of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to receive and store data required under their licence conditions. Members are probably aware that the policy issues in relation to science delivery are generally attended to by the customer departments for whom we provide the service, but my department provides the actual science that goes into those systems.

This particular system is going to provide a user-friendly database which is available to external clients and government officers via a secure web interface. Data and information collected relates to storage, treatment and discharge of wastewater to the surrounding environment. WaTERS will receive routine monitoring data and notification of wastewater releases or breaches of licence conditions. Licence holders are usually required to measure concentrations of pollutants such as nutrients, organic matter, suspended solids, salt, metals and pathogens in addition to measuring release volumes. To assist compliance, these measurements are compared to the limits specified in the licence conditions. This system will automatically report to both industry and to DEHP.

While my department is currently focusing on WaTERS implementation with large coalmines, the system could eventually be rolled out to any regulated activity or industry in Queensland, particularly those that discharge wastewater into the environment. WaTERS has the potential to significantly streamline the regulatory burden of both industry and DEHP. It reduces red tape by diminishing the time and resources industry has to spend on the preparation of reports and in responding to data requests from government departments and regulators. The system also significantly improves the efficiency and effectiveness of compliance checking and impact assessment for government by making up-to-date data and information available quickly and easily.

This new and improved system replaces an existing system called the point source database that has already been implemented across 75 organisations and over 150 sites in Queensland. The existing point source database clients are being migrated to WaTERS. Once implemented, the system is going to lead to substantial savings due to the efficiencies gained by both the public and private sectors. The scope of WaTERS is broader than the existing point source database. It caters for a greater range of industries, across more areas of Queensland and will include both end-of-pipe and receiving environment monitoring data as well as allowing for the submission of reports and notification of events such as wastewater releases.

WaTERS is going to be jointly launched by my department and EHP in the last quarter of this calendar year. Once that launch has occurred, industries will be able to start submitting their data and reports directly into the system. WaTERS is going to greatly improve the tracking of wastewater discharges and regulation, reporting and decision making.

CHAIR: I call the member for Waterford.

Mr LATTER: I reference page 4 of the SDS and your recent trip to BIO 2013. What is the government doing to support life sciences in Queensland?

Mr WALKER: Thank you for that question. The trip was certainly a very interesting one for me. It was a chance to mix with more than 50 of Queensland's life science professional. Peter Beattie was also present as the federal government ambassador in the life sciences area. I must commend Mr Beattie for his assistance to me and to the delegates in his obvious enthusiasm for this area and his willingness to openly engage Queenslanders in interaction with the many people in the industry that he knows but also with the federal government whom he represents.

This is a very important sector of Queensland's economy. It is comprised of approximately 300 life science companies and research organisations, and the sector contributes to the state's economic and social outcomes in a very big way. I have previously spoken to the House about some of Queensland's great success stories—for example, tissue therapies and the development of the wound healing treatment VitroGro, which is currently manufactured and ready for an international sales launch in Europe later this year. But the work behind any of these developments is neither quick nor easy, and it takes world-class researchers linked with savvy business operators to develop successful commercial outcomes from science—something that this government recognised from the outset.

The Queensland government is committed to supporting the growth of the life sciences industry through a number of key initiatives. Queensland's extensive life science capabilities will be centre stage later in the year at a very exciting event, which is the annual AusBiotech national conference in Brisbane, which runs from 29 October to 1 November. We have actually scored the double. We also get AusBiotech the following year and that will be held on the Gold Coast in late October 2014. I was

certainly keen to spread the word in my meetings both in China and in Chicago with all of the delegates to ensure that they knew about AusBiotech and that we got a good international representation here, because it is the key annual industry event for the life sciences sector in Australia. In fact it has become one of the leading biotechnology conferences in the Asia Pacific region.

I am also looking forward to the official opening of the Translational Research Institute and the co-located BioPharmaceuticals Australia facility, which is now operated by a commercial partner DSM Biologics. I am told that that is set to take place at the same time as the AusBiotech conference. These two facilities are very important because they mean that biopharmaceuticals can be discovered, developed, clinically test and manufactured in a single location, on the PA Hospital campus right here in Queensland.

As I said, I was proud to lead the group of 55 delegates from the life sciences industry to the BIO 2013 conference in Chicago. This is a huge event. It attracts up to 18,000 delegates. I think the numbers were slightly down this year, but it was still a very significant event. It is indeed the most significant international biotechnology event across the field, and it has lots of things associated with it. Not only are there displays within the convention itself; but a lot of meetings happen on the side and that is where the real business is done.

It is an opportunity to showcase the significant contribution that Queenslanders' researchers and businesses are making on the global stage. The work of many of them is regularly represented in other regions including Europe, Korea and Japan by Life Sciences Queensland, which is the industry association. It has over 100 members, including commitments from the Queensland government and a number of foundation supporters drawn from commerce and academia. As the state's peak industry body, the LSQ plays an important role in bringing together the various sectors of the life sciences industry and it works closely to assist its members and the government to create and explore opportunities for mutual benefit. LSQ is an investment into the future of life sciences in Queensland and a critical component for the sector's continual growth. So we have great capability in Queensland, and I certainly congratulate the life sciences industry for its contribution towards the creation of a strong and diverse Queensland economy.

If I can be excused and give a personal anecdote, which is a warning to all who travel to Chicago. At the end of one of the evenings I was walking with Chris Rodwell, our trade commissioner, to have a cool drink and discuss the events of the day and I felt something whiz past me and I looked back at Mr Rodwell, who by that stage was wearing a large egg on his shirt which had been thrown from a passing Chicago car. I do not think they knew who we were, so I think it was a random egg. But if you thought Al Capone was a danger on the streets of Chicago, egg throwers certainly are at this point in time.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We will remember. I now call the member for Mackay.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, you referred to an initiative of funding collaboration between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Queensland. You stated that there was \$500,000 over the next two years. Minister, is that new money or is it a reallocation of funds from within your own department or from other departments? I note that you have mentioned agriculture.

Mr WALKER: Yes. I will have to check with my DG.

Mr MULHERIN: You mentioned it was new money.

Mr WALKER: I will hand that to the director-general.

Mr Garner: It was a reallocation of funds within the department.

Mr MULHERIN: What programs was it taken away from?

Mr Garner: I will hand over to my DDG for that.

Mr Crombie: From memory, the \$500,000 was actually underutilised departmental expenses. It has not actually come from a grant program. So it has been revenue that we have not used for operations that has been reallocated to this. That is my understanding of that \$500,000.

Mr MULHERIN: Will other agencies contribute to that \$500,000 over two years?

Mr Crombie: No. That is straight DSITIA funds.

Mr MULHERIN: I just clarify for the record that it is not new money. I seek leave of the committee to table a briefing note from the department. Minister, I refer to a departmental briefing note prepared for your predecessor in late 2012 which I have asked the committee for approval to

table. Minister, the briefing note states that there was no funding allocated in the 2012-13 budget for new science investment. Can you confirm that this was the case in the last financial year and can you confirm that the only new science spending in 2013-14 is \$500,000 allocated to the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research and that this spending was funded from a reallocation of the existing budget and it is not additional spending?

Mr WALKER: Madam Chair, may I look at the document before I answer, please?

CHAIR: We were going to reserve a decision as to whether this would be tabled until later.

Mr MULHERIN: I sought leave.

CHAIR: It is an RTI document but it does have many people's names in it.

Mr MULHERIN: It has been redacted, Madam Chair, by the RTI officer of the department. It is out there in the public domain. It has not fallen off the back of a truck. It has 'RTI release' written all over it. The government prides itself on accountability. I think the minister would like to look at it.

CHAIR: It is an RTI document. I will accept that it be tabled. I did not catch the first part of your question, member for Mackay.

Mr MULHERIN: I will repeat the question. Minister, I refer you to a departmental briefing note prepared for your predecessor in late 2012 which now has been tabled. Minister, the briefing note states that there was no funding allocated in the 2012-13 budget for new science investment. Can you confirm that this was the case in the last financial year and can you confirm that the only new science spending in 2013-14 is \$500,000 allocated to the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research and that this spending was funded from a reallocation of the existing budget and is not additional spending?

Mr WALKER: I am just checking the document so I understand the context.

CHAIR: Minister, if you wish to take it on notice—

Mr WALKER: I will let my deputy DG have a look at it. We may be able to answer it straightaway.

Mr MULHERIN: I will move on to another question and come back to that answer if that makes it easier.

Mr WALKER: Thank you.

Mr MULHERIN: I refer to page 6 of the SDS and the fact that \$60.724 million is budgeted for Science Delivery Services in 2013-14 which represents a cut of almost \$6 million since last year. If this is the case, do you acknowledge that science spending is not just stagnating but actually going backwards under your government?

Mr WALKER: I appreciate the question and am happy to answer it. The Science Delivery budget is actually made up of two elements, which is the controlled or the state appropriated budget and some external funding which is paid on a fee-for-service basis by Queensland government client departments and the Australian government and academic and industry sectors. So the Science Delivery's controlled budget has fallen \$6.37 million from \$53.06 million in 2012-13 to \$46.69 million in 2013-14. This is due to the net effect of ongoing savings required largely delivered through an organisation restructure and the cessation of some projects and the refocusing on outcomes management. So that is the extent of the controlled budget.

The Science Delivery's external budget estimate for 2012-13 was \$11.823 million. However, actual user charges amounted to \$19.88 million. So approximately \$12.82 million of this amount will carry over to the 2013 financial year as existing programs and projects continue. Many of these projects are conducted over a number of years which explains why that carryover is necessary.

The fact that the Science Delivery Division attracts significant levels of external funding demonstrates the high regard in which Queensland scientists are held. In 2013-14 Science Delivery's external budget estimate for new programs and projects is \$11.82 million, and to date \$3.75 million is confirmed. Negotiations are currently underway with client departments to finalise the external budget. No further funding is expected from the Australian government, industry or academic sectors at this time.

There is some funding which I would want to refer to within the \$67 million committed to Innovation and Science Development, and that includes \$6.5 million for the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine to commence construction of the Townsville facility in conjunction with James Cook University, and that is new funding; \$41 million for payments to researchers, science

organisations, institutes and universities; \$7 million for a suite of innovation, commercialisation and digital economy activities; and \$500,000 is the first payment to the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research as the centrepiece of a new research driven approach to dementia, as I mentioned before; as well as operational expenditure for supplies and services.

Mr MULHERIN: You said that \$6.5 million for JCU is new funding. Are you sure of that or is it a reallocation?

Mr WALKER: I will double-check my advice.

Mr Garner: It is new funding.

Mr MULHERIN: It is new funding. I just saw someone shake their head in the back. You mentioned the reduction of \$6.3 million was through a reorganisation of staff and cessation of projects. What projects have you ceased?

Mr WALKER: I think if we are getting down to that detailed project level, I might ask Mr Crombie, who is the Deputy Director-General of Innovation and Science Development, to deal with that.

Mr Crombie: If I could perhaps clarify the question. So you are asking what we are actually spending the money on in this year's budget?

Mr MULHERIN: There is one outstanding question around the briefing note, if you have had time to look at that. Then there is the discussion we are having at the moment where I raised the issue that the \$60.724 million budgeted for Science Delivery represents a cut of almost \$6 million since last year. The minister in his response said that that \$6 million odd was due to a staff reorganisation and the cessation of projects. So we have two questions out there at the moment. One relates to the ministerial briefing and then this other one relates to a cut of about \$6 million. I was asking the question: what are the projects that were ceased?

Mr Crombie: The division has gone through a reorganisation. What that has seen is a reduction in the number of staff.

Mr MULHERIN: Yes.

Mr Crombie: So the reduction in funds—if I just look at the SDS and explain the difference between the SDS actual and the SDS estimate. That is probably the easiest way of dealing with this.

Mr MULHERIN: I accept that there has been a reduction in staff. The minister indicated that there was a cessation of projects. I want to know what the projects were.

Mr Crombie: A number of projects that would have had contract funding have come to an end. So it is not that we have necessarily stopped any of those. Quite a chunk of that reduction will be because contracts have come to their natural conclusion during the 2012-13 period. So the money would not be showing there for 2013-14 but it would have shown in 2012-13 as a milestone payment to come during that period of time.

Mr MULHERIN: So in terms of those projects that came to an end, what are the outcomes of those projects?

Mr Crombie: I would have to—

Mr MULHERIN: Can you provide the committee with a list of those projects, including the potential of commercialisation?

Mr Crombie: We could provide you with a list of the projects that came to completion during 2012-13 that we had grant payments in place for.

Mr MULHERIN: And whether they have gone on to be commercialised.

Mr Crombie: In a lot of cases I will not be able to provide that information because we were not funding them to be commercialised.

Mr WALKER: We will take that on notice.

Mr LATTER: Point of order, Madam Chair, if I may. I seek some clarification as to relevance. When we are talking about a previous spend that has come to an end, what relevance does that have to the ongoing spend for the proposed budget?

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr MULHERIN: With all due respect, taxpayers' money is being invested in science projects with the aim of growing the productivity of the nation, creating new industries. Surely this committee has the right to question the minister about the success of these things. I am not saying that the minister can answer the questions on the spot, but I have a genuine interest in these areas.

CHAIR: Minister, are you happy to take the—

Mr WALKER: I take the member's point. I am quite happy to provide that information and take the question on notice.

CHAIR: You do not have to take the question if you do not wish.

Mr MULHERIN: Thanks, Minister. Can we get back to that briefing note?

Mr WALKER: We are happy to take the question. We will take that on notice in relation to the briefing note and get back to the committee on that matter.

Mr MULHERIN: Thanks, Minister. Minister, you mentioned external funding of \$19.8 million from other government agencies including federal government agencies. Has your department conducted an intellectual property audit on some of these services that you are able to provide? Are you getting a sufficient rate of return? Do we know what rate of return you are getting on intellectual property?

Mr WALKER: The intellectual property audit manager has been an important part of what we need to do in this area. We do recognise that IP is an important part of it. There will be a whole-of-government IP audit. That will certainly assist us to assess our crown IP holdings and ensure IP management arrangements are in place, which is also important. On this particular matter I will hand over to Mr Crombie again to explain what is being done in this area within Science.

Mr Crombie: The audit we have undertaken was done by questionnaire across all departments. DSITIA was actually done as a pilot to that. We have been looking more around the areas of management of IP—how IP is actually being identified and how it is being protected. In particular we have been looking at the areas within departments where the nature of the work they do might offer opportunities to go back and look at it through a much more commercial lens. At this stage we have undertaken that. We are then going to work through implementation of those recommendations, which would see us doing follow-up work with all agencies including our own.

Mr MULHERIN: Like sending out invoices for the use of intellectual property?

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Mackay. The time for that block of questions has come to an end. We will move to government questions. Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS. How are your scientists using satellite imagery to map and monitor the state's resources?

Mr WALKER: Certainly in a state as large as Queensland, satellite imagery and its use is an innovative and cost-effective way to accurately assess and monitor natural resources. Scientists at the Remote Sensing Centre within my department map land-cover features including woodlands and forests, ground cover, water bodies, fire scars and land use. Changes to these are monitored over periods of up to 30 years. By using Queensland's unique archive of satellite imagery, the centre can create reliable and objective data at scales suitable for a wide range of Queensland's land management and policy requirements.

The satellite imagery and the resultant products developed by my scientists are widely used within government to inform policy and legislation and to meet regulatory requirements. These include vegetation management planning and compliance; agricultural production programs, including the land audit; environmental offsets; statutory regional planning; the Rural Leasehold Land Strategy; fire planning and management; and the Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan. These derived products are also used by regional natural resource management groups, peak industry bodies, consultants, research agencies, community groups and land managers.

The centre is based at the Ecosciences Precinct, where high-performance computing infrastructure allows scientists to store, process and analyse very large data sets. Recently Science Delivery acquired a very high-speed connection to the natural science research network AARNet. This has enabled the centre to acquire the entire Landsat satellite image archive for Queensland, providing total coverage of the state every month for almost 30 years.

With its long-term systematic image acquisition program, the Landsat program has provided Queensland with a consistent, repeatable and objective monitoring tool for a number of years. The recent launch of the latest US Landsat satellite, Landsat 8, will ensure continued mapping and monitoring of Queensland resources into the future. All Landsat imagery has now been made available by the United States Geological Survey, making it a cost-effective mapping and monitoring solution for Queensland.

As a result of world renowned research and development undertaken as part of the Statewide Landcover and Trees Study, scientists at the centre apply a number of sophisticated correction techniques to Landsat imagery to account for image variations due to seasonal effects and to deal with cloud and other shadowing effects. This enables the scientists to produce a consistent and seamless archive of imagery across the state which allows them to compare apples with apples over time to monitor changes to the state's resources.

My scientists analyse subtle trends such as woody thickening and ground-cover changes as well as major changes in the landscape such as wildfires. My scientists conduct rigorous quantitative field work to validate their data, travelling to remote parts of the state to measure ground cover and vegetation as well as communicate with land managers and local experts. As with all science in my department, the Remote Sensing Centre is committed to continuous improvement and development in this rapidly evolving technology. The scientists at the centre have established strong collaborative partnerships within Australia and internationally to ensure world's best practice in the development of objective and defensible mapping and monitoring tools.

The wealth of satellite, airborne and ground based data now available is providing exciting opportunities for my remote-sensing experts. My department's ability to use the same data and systems to propagate multiple products delivers a return on the cost of monitoring the landscape from space. As arts minister I should add that one of the uses to which the Landsat pictures can be put is art for one's wall. I have a couple of nice pieces of art from the Queensland Art Gallery hanging on the wall of my ministerial office but I also have a Landsat satellite picture, which is equally beautiful and a nice example of where science and art can meet.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, I refer to page 5 of the SDS regarding the completion of a report titled *Health of Queensland science*. Can you describe what was found in the Chief Scientist's *Health of Queensland science* report and any recommendations for the future?

Mr WALKER: I thank the honourable member for that question. It is always a pleasure for me in my job to meet with the Chief Scientist, as I do regularly. It was good to meet with him to discuss his recently completed report, which provides a snapshot of the state's science capacity and activity. As part of the government's commitment that the Chief Scientist be properly in charge of science policy within the state, the report of the Chief Scientist, Dr Geoff Garrett, covered three main areas. The first was the investments made in scientific activity and relevant infrastructure in the state, the second was the people and skills we have servicing science in Queensland and the third was collaborations among researchers and the translation of research into meaningful outcomes.

Even in this time of financial restraint, the Newman government realises the importance of science and research and has continued to support areas of significance for the state, as shown by the recent \$9 million investment in the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research—I interpose: I may not have made it clear in my answer to the earlier question from the member for Mackay that the budget commitment for that this year is new money as well—and the \$42 million investment into the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine.

One of the Chief Scientist's key observations is that the time has come to build on the sunk investments and maintain the momentum which has been generated—that is, we now need to focus on the brains rather than the bricks. We need to attract and retain top scientific talent to address Queensland's key challenges and opportunities. That is one of the things that I thought was an important sideline of the dementia investment, as I said before: not only are we helping people's health outcomes; we are also getting smart minds here.

For example, Queensland could and should aim to leverage a greater share of available Commonwealth R&D funding such as that offered through the National Health and Medical Research Council. In 2011 Queensland received only 15.1 per cent of national funding compared to our roughly 20 per cent contribution to the Australian economy and population. With the increasing scale and complexity of scientific challenges and our comparatively modest resources, collaboration with other researchers, whether around Australia or overseas, is vitally important. We need to learn from other countries, subjects and sectors. The Queensland Chief Scientist's report shows that we have a relatively strong international collaborative research base and we need to make sure these linkages grow in the future, particularly with emerging science powerhouses like China and India.

Overall, the report from the Queensland Chief Scientist shows that the science and research sector is doing well compared to a decade ago. However, there is always room for improvement. We have some great scientific facilities in the state, and great efforts have been made to get Queensland on the scientific map.

The Newman government understands the important role science and research play in our economy. That is exemplified by our financial commitment to dementia research and tropical health and medicine, as I mentioned earlier. We now need to maintain the momentum that the state has generated and focus our research efforts in particular areas of benefit or challenge to Queensland, ensuring as we do that we get the best return on our investment.

Mr BENNETT: I refer to page 4 of the SDS regarding your portfolio's support for other government departments. Can you give examples of how the work of the scientists is supporting other government departments?

Mr WALKER: The work of my scientists in the Science Delivery Division is important. As I mentioned I think in my earlier answer, the general structure of the way Science works is that my department is the back-of-house support to other departments in providing the services they need. So they are our customer and we provide the service. We provide that scientific information and advice to other Queensland government departments. The six key client departments that we service are the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection; the Department of Natural Resources and Mines; the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing; the Department of Energy and Water Supply; the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning; and the Department of Community Safety.

Science Delivery, as that section of my department is called, provides services and advice in the areas of water—both fresh water and marine—land and vegetation, air quality, coastal impacts, climate risk and biodiversity to support the policy, planning and management priorities of Queensland government departments. For example, my scientists are currently developing digital mapping that shows the location of historical fires in Queensland by mapping fire scars. Fire scar is the blackened area that remains after a bushfire has passed through an open area. A digital map will show the location of previous fire scars, the approximate date of the fire plus the number of fires that have occurred over the last 25 years. That mapping will also provide information about how much time has passed since the last fire occurred in a particular area, which is a consideration for future fire hazard. The fire scar maps will be available towards the end of the year and will service a range of programs and initiatives across a number of departments.

The Department of Community Safety is already using our preliminary data to plan fire management operations for the next fire season. They use the data to assess where and how many times an area has burned in recent years. That means that on-ground resources and fire management programs can be directed to where they are best used for the protection of the community and that important energy, water supply and agricultural assets are preserved.

The Department of Community Safety is also combining the fire data with other vegetation data to help estimate fuel loads and fire hazard to support the development of the State Planning Policy. Fire is an important management tool for the grazing industry, as it assists in the management of pests and weeds and in maintaining pasture quality and quantity for production. The fire scar data produced will assist the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry extension officers, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and industry bodies to assist producers to improve fire planning and management for increased productivity.

The mapping is based on the satellite imagery from the NASA Landsat satellite missions about which I spoke earlier. That is the longest record of systematic imaging of the earth's surface in history. My scientists process and analyse this freely available imagery using high-performance computing infrastructure at the Ecosciences Precinct here in Brisbane. My scientists analyse a sequence of satellite images to detect changes in land cover. Contextual information is then used to determine if a detected change is due to fire. If so, then the extent of the fire is mapped. The entire process is automated, which makes it an innovative and highly efficient system. This approach is at the leading edge of satellite image processing.

Over the coming months the final touches to the operational system are being undertaken. Significant interest has been expressed in this work by national and international agencies. This is an exciting activity that shows how the work of my scientists is providing important products and services which support the work of this government.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS and the department's achievements of having 'developed and updated innovative environmental information systems providing ready access to scientific information and maps to support decision making within other state government departments and to inform industry, small business, education facilities and the public'. As part of this responsibility, did you receive any notification of the release of four unarmed bombs by the US navy on the Great Barrier Reef, as reported on 22 July? Were you or any other representatives of the Queensland government requested to provide any advice about the location of the drops or any follow-up actions to protect the reef?

Mr WALKER: I will take that question on notice, if I may.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, I refer to page 5 of the SDS and the establishment of the Wastewater Tracking and Electronic Reporting System. Minister, have Science Delivery Services had any input into the government's pilot release of mine water, if you are able to release this advice from your department on the pilot mine water releases?

Mr WALKER: I did refer earlier to the Wastewater Tracking and Electronic Reporting System. I think I dealt in my answer with the fact that that pilot has been in the area of mines.

Mr MULHERIN: Will you release the advice that comes from that tracking system that you put in place on the pilot mine water releases?

Mr WALKER: I might ask Dr Christine Williams, the assistant DG in Science Delivery who has been involved in that program, to answer that question, if I may.

Dr Williams: Just to confirm: you are wanting to find out about the role that we played in the release of the data?

Mr MULHERIN: Yes, that is right.

Dr Williams: We were asked to participate in that program by a number of departments, obviously run through the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines—

Mr MULHERIN: So was it coordinated by State Development?

Dr Williams: It was coordinated by them, but through the department of Natural Resource and Mines as the coordinating group with regard to the monitoring program. So we provided advice in terms of the design of the monitoring program, to make sure it was scientifically rigorous, and we also assisted in actually undertaking some of the monitoring. The results of that monitoring were compiled with the monitoring that was undertaken by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines itself, so it was a combined effort. The data was compiled and reports have been presented on the web. They are on the Fitzroy River website, fitzroyriver.qld.gov.au. All of the results have been released.

Mr MULHERIN: Did your department design the parameters?

Dr Williams: Yes. With the knowledge that we have collected over monitoring and working with licence conditions over the mining activities in the state, we were well placed to be able to design what was an appropriate monitoring program in terms of the types of things that have to be monitored in terms of metals and particles and sediment. We certainly participated in that. As well as the hydrological modelling that we undertake, we know how much water will be flowing at particular times and then we can set out an appropriate regime to capture the impact.

Mr MULHERIN: This data that you refer to, how long has that had—

CHAIR: Member for Mackay, you are asking these questions through the minister, are you not?

Mr MULHERIN: Yes. I can keep asking you, Dr Williams, and you can keep doing a dummy pass if you like. Thank you for persevering. In terms of the data that you have collected, how long have you collected that data for?

Dr Williams: The first data was collected prior to the first releases of the season. The pilot commenced obviously in the summer of 2012-13, so information was collected to get the base conditions prior to that.

Mr MULHERIN: Where was the base data for the release? Did you have that or did you have to—

Dr Williams: No, we went and collected it in November and December.

Mr MULHERIN: In the first release?

Dr Williams: No, before the release. We knew it was important to collect data beforehand to find out what the conditions of the river were prior to any mine releases so we could actually look at what the impact of any mine releases were on water quality.

Mr MULHERIN: Is all of that data set out there in the public domain?

Dr Williams: Yes, it is all out there in the public domain. Following that, data was collected every time there was a release and monthly afterwards.

Mr MULHERIN: Minister, I refer to page 13 of the SDS. Why is the department targeting a lower level of satisfaction from stakeholders with Innovation and Science Development Service's consultative and engagement processes this financial year than achieved last financial year? I note the footnote on page 14 uses the same excuse for targeting a lower result as in last year's SDS.

Mr WALKER: What line was the honourable member referring to?

Mr MULHERIN: The consultative and engagement processes.

Mr WALKER: That is the line that has got the 2012-13 target estimate 80 per cent, the actual 91 per cent and then the target 85 per cent; is that the one you mean? That does show an increase in the target.

Mr MULHERIN: Estimated actual 80 per cent; in 2013-14, 85. I note that in the footnote it used the same excuse for targeting a lower result.

Mr WALKER: I would point out it is not a lower result; in fact, the target is increasing from 80 to 85. It is lower against the actual achieved of 91.

Mr MULHERIN: The target is estimated at 85, but the estimated actual was 80 in 2012-13. Now you are targeting the same figure, 85, so you are getting it up, but the footnote on page 14 uses the same excuse for targeting a lower result as in last year's SDS. So it is the same as the previous year.

Mr WALKER: I do not know about the footnote being the same. I just want to reinforce that the target has increased from 80 per cent to 85 per cent and the actual achieved was 91 per cent, the way I read the—

Mr MULHERIN: I read the level of science and innovation targeted estimate is 80 per cent and it is actually 91—

Mr WALKER: As I read it, 80 per cent was our target for 2012-13. We actually achieved 91.

Mr MULHERIN: But why are you coming below 91?

Mr WALKER: Well, 91 was a very good score and we did a lot better than our 80 per cent. We are increasing the underlying target. But I will ask if I can refer that to the director-general, who may have more to say.

Mr Garner: As the minister has identified and as the question indicates, certainly the target last year was 80 per cent. It was overachieved—91 per cent. I am not sure about the same excuse. One of the key contributors to that increase has actually been the partners in technology briefings which have been a great success, particularly with the SMB market, and as such the team has done a great job. Certainly we always strive to achieve stretch goals, but in increasing them from 80 per cent to 85 per cent we similarly want them to keep focusing on improvement, and we certainly trust and hope that they can continue to improve over that target. So what we could actually also provide is the breakdown of that 91 per cent. Certainly for the digital economy policy engagement collaboration the estimated actual was 87 per cent; science capability engagement collaboration was 91 per cent; innovation IP policy and services, 87 per cent; and commercialisation information services, 90 per cent. As such we are also focused on ensuring that we assess all components of that target. I am very happy that the team continues to exceed the targets, but we will continue to monitor and measure that.

Mr MULHERIN: How many events did you measure that across?

Mr Garner: We will take that on notice for you.

CHAIR: That is up to you to take on notice.

Mr WALKER: I am sorry. We will take that on notice, if we may. Could I just interpose. In respect of the question on notice that was asked by the member for Mackay with respect to the IT assets, that was the question about whether we could list the assets that that might apply to. The scope of the audit includes software application assets and hardware assets. That data is collected annually from agencies. The data is due to be published on the DSITIA open data portal by 31 July

this year, so in just a week's time, which will include estimated replacement costs. If we do a printout of that, it will run to some hundreds of pages. I just wondered if the member would be happy to accept my assurance about that publication and whether referral to the DSITIA open data website on 31 July would satisfy his request? Otherwise we can do a printout overnight, but it is a big job.

Mr MULHERIN: That is fine. I do not require a printout. Minister, we spoke about science. Have there ever been any discussions or are you progressing any discussions at a national level about having a national approach to the government spend on science rather than looking at the strengths of each state? There is a limited amount of money. Is there any approach to national R&D right across science? There has been some progress, I understand, in agriculture in that area. Is there a will from your ministerial colleagues in other jurisdictions across science in general?

Mr WALKER: It is a good question. I must say, I have been trying to arrange meetings with both the federal minister and the opposition spokesperson to start those discussions at a political level. I think it is an important thing, but I think the chief scientist may be able to answer that more specifically at a practical level. If I can ask that he be given leave to answer that question.

Dr Garrett: There is a lot of action at the national level. There is a forum of Australian chief scientists. Last week the chief scientist for the nation, Professor Ian Chubb, was talking about the national strategy for investment and research. He is giving a National Press Club speech at the end of this month where he is laying out those plans that we discussed at some length amongst the forum and other stakeholders. I think there is a concern nationwide around the ongoing investment in science and research and the need for a strategy at a national level. There has not been a strategy. I think we have all been pushing for a strategy in the same way that we are developing a strategy here in Queensland with my colleagues and the minister.

Mr MULHERIN: Do you think you will reach a consensus on that?

Dr Garrett: There has been a significant consensus around the development of 15 national research priorities, which has been a review process for the priorities that have been in place for the last six years associated with five national challenges. That was comprehensive consultation resulting in consensus. We are running a similar process here in Queensland for the development of our own research priorities. We are a relatively small nation with a small amount of money available to us, and we need to focus our efforts.

CHAIR: The time is now 5.30 and we will adjourn for 30 minutes until 6 pm. When the hearing resumes, we will continue to examine the estimates portfolio of the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, and this will be in respect of the Arts.

Proceedings suspended from 5.31 pm to 5.59 pm

CHAIR: The hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee is now resumed. We will continue by considering the Arts. We welcome to the table Mr Chris Saines, Director of the Queensland Art Gallery; Professor Suzanne Miller, Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Museum; Mr John Kotzas, Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Performing Arts Centre; Ms Sue Donnelly, Executive Director of the Queensland Theatre Company; Mr Bryan Lowe, Chief Executive Officer of Screen Queensland; and Ms Janette Wright, Chief Executive Officer and State Librarian from the State Library of Queensland. Under schedule 7 of standing orders, these executive officers as well as the director-general may be asked questions directly by the committee. I will begin the questions for the government sector. Minister, I refer to page 5 of the SDS. Would the minister outline how Boost to Touring has contributed to the growth in attendance figures?

Mr WALKER: I am very happy to do that. Boost to Touring is a \$3 million commitment over four years that aims to increase the number of touring arts productions, to extend the reach of the touring program, to double the touring arts experiences in regional communities and to support the major state companies in their goal of touring regularly to regional Queensland. The Boost to Touring has already stimulated regional Queensland's touring activity, with a significant increase in audience numbers through subsidised touring activity.

We had audience numbers of 29,187 in 2011 before we boosted touring and now my department estimates 60,000 people will see arts and cultural productions locally in the 2013 calendar year. I am sure you will agree that this is money well spent. It is just another way that the government is ensuring all Queenslanders have access to the arts. Overall, the Playing Queensland Fund, which incorporates the government's Boost to Touring, allocates \$10.6 million over four years—that is, 2013

to 2016—to support touring in Queensland. Since the Playing Queensland Fund opened on 31 December 2012, 21 applications have been approved. So far in 2013, the government's touring fund has supported 34 tours which will reach 100 different regional Queensland communities. Performances for 2012 total 306, with 400 projected by the 2013 year's end.

To give you an idea of the quality and diversity of work touring under the Playing Queensland Fund, I want to highlight a couple of fantastic tours which are coming up this year. Townsville company Dancenorth will tour a main stage and educational touring program through regional Queensland. The tour incorporates presentations of *Triple Bill* and the new work, which I am hoping to see tomorrow night, *Abandon* in collaboration with Opera Queensland plus a community development and educational workshop program. Twelve performances in all will be delivered from March to September 2013 across the Gold Coast, Ayr, Brisbane, Rockhampton, Mackay, Mount Isa, Winton, Emerald, Capella, Blackwater, Gladstone and Proserpine. The wonderfully named Impossible Odds Records will tour three Queensland Indigenous bands—Impossible Odds, Classik Nawu and The Coldwater Band—to regional centres and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to perform concerts and conduct professional development workshops for emerging Indigenous musicians during NAIDOC Week in July 2013.

The Australian Chamber Orchestra will tour its ensemble ACO2 to Cairns, Cleveland, Mackay and Rockhampton presenting high-quality concerts accompanied by educational workshops in Cairns and open rehearsals in Rockhampton in September 2013. Opera Queensland will be undertaking a regional Queensland tour of *Waltzing Our Matilda*, a theatrical journey through the music and history of Queensland as told by the Australian icon, Banjo Paterson. This popular opera work celebrates the great men and women who shaped Queensland and Australia's musical heritage. I am sure you will agree that there is something for everyone, and this tour will go to 10 venues in total covering Atherton, Ayr, Biloela, Wandoan, Kenilworth, Redcliffe, Goondiwindi, Quilpie, St George and Mundubbera.

I am sure you will agree that there is something to appeal to everyone and to grow audience numbers from this fantastic touring program. I should point out that, although the Boost to Touring Fund is obviously designed to tour things from the big smoke to the bush, there is also sometimes a failure to recognise what the bush itself is growing in a home-grown way in arts. So while I think this is a very important program, we must also make sure that through other programs—and the RADF program is certainly one of those—home-grown arts in the bush and in regional and rural Queensland are also developed as well as touring the big shows.

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

Mr BOOTHMAN: Can the minister tell us how he is working to get Queensland's fair share of federal arts and cultural funding?

Mr WALKER: I thank the honourable member for this question, because it is a very important one and it is one that I raised last week on radio to try to get this argument running because Queensland certainly misses out on its fair share of federal arts and cultural funding. The Queensland Ballet, Opera Queensland and the Queensland Theatre Company receive only 21 per cent of their government funding from the Australian government. Let us compare this with the Sydney Dance Company, which receives 90 per cent of its government funding from the Australian government. Major performing arts organisations in other states receive between 50 per cent and 90 per cent of their funding from the Australian government. Only the Queensland Symphony Orchestra can boast that it gets this level of funding from the Australian government. Across other funding areas, Queensland also misses out. Queensland's population is 21 per cent of Australia's population, yet Queensland's share of funding secured through the Australia Council for the Arts is only 10 per cent of the funds distributed to states and territories.

The arts community is not happy with this situation and I was recently on Steve Austin's program on 612ABC where the respected lighting designer Daniel Anderson, who is presently doing some work with *Cinderella* with Opera Queensland, spoke about his unsuccessful applications to the Australia Council, in particular his application to be the first non-singing artist in residence at Opera Queensland. He described the feeling on the lack of success for Queensland artists as this—that Queensland artists felt that they seemed to be left out and they do not know why. I am working with Arts Queensland to redress this situation. Vital to improving the success rate for Queensland artists is to ensure that they keep applying for grants. Recent research has revealed a low application rate is a significant contributing factor to the low number of grants to Queensland artists. For every Queensland artist applying for funding in 2011, three were applying from New South Wales or Victoria.

Arts Queensland is actively encouraging Queenslanders to seek Australia Council funding in particular through the grants support officer role established by the government. This officer is a valuable resource and there to advise people and help them understand what is available from the Australia Council and how they can best go about applying for grants. I want to encourage people to make sure that they continue to go ahead and apply for grants and through this service from Arts Queensland we can help people get to that level. People should not be discouraged. Artists think it is not worth it to apply because of the success rate, but we want to boost that and convince them that it is worth trying. I want to assure the Queensland arts community that we will continue to try to improve this situation through Arts Queensland working closely with the Australia Council to pinpoint the reasons for funding inequity and find ways to improve the level of this funding going to Queensland. Also, the state and federal governments recently signed the national arts accord, and I will be working actively to secure a better deal for Queensland through this forum. I should also add that I am in constant contact with Senator Brandis, the shadow arts minister, about this. He has also raised this issue publicly and is very keen to ensure also that Queensland gets its fair share.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr BENNETT: Will the minister reflect on some of the cultural highlights of this government through 2012-13 please?

Mr WALKER: Yes. 2012-13 was certainly another exciting year for arts and culture here in Queensland. The government is committed to making Queensland a cultural hub by continuing to deliver more great arts and culture for more Queenslanders. Queensland continues to grow its reputation for staging blockbuster arts events that attract record numbers of Queenslanders and interstate and international visitors. The sell-out season of the Bolshoi Ballet at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre; the allocation of some \$600,000 for the Creative Recovery—Building Resilience initiative, an arts-led recovery disaster fund for affected areas of Queensland; and the announcement of the first recipients for the Playing Queensland and Super Star funds have all been highlights for me over the past 12 months.

As the committee would be aware, the first recipient of the Super Star Fund was the Queensland Ballet, which received \$300,000 towards a Queensland exclusive Australian premiere of the world acclaimed Sir Kenneth MacMillan production of *Romeo and Juliet*. That *Romeo and Juliet* performance will actually be performed by superstars of the ballet world, so not only do we have a superstar production but we have superstar performers. The two principal guest artists are the acclaimed Spanish ballerina and artistic director of the English National Ballet, Tamara Rojo, and principal guest artist with the Royal Ballet, Cuban dancer Carlos Acosta. This is a full-length ballet choreographed by the late Sir Kenneth MacMillan featuring the Birmingham Royal Ballet's world-class design in sets and costumes.

The Boost to Touring has already stimulated regional Queensland's touring activity, with a significant increase in audience numbers through subsidised touring activity. As I pointed out in my answer to the last question, performances for 2012 totalled 306 and we think we will get to 400 by the end of this year. The communities across Queensland that are enjoying touring include Cooktown, Mount Isa, Longreach, Quilpie, Roma, Winton, Birdsville and Goondiwindi. The 2013 tours offer high-quality, diverse touring productions from groups such as Shake & Stir Theatre Co. and the Queensland Music Festival, and there have been some great ones in this last week. I was at Dalby on the weekend, albeit in the rain, for the performance there. Others include Expressions Dance Co., Dancenorth, Deborah Conway, deBASE Productions and QMusic. Additionally, significant tours will be undertaken by the major state companies, with Queensland Ballet touring *Giselle* and Opera Queensland *Waltzing Our Matilda*.

Queensland blockbuster arts and culture events attracted record numbers in 2012-13, and interstate and international visitors were also attracted to those events. Some of the milestones—and these are good numbers—were that 200,000 visitors attended the Queensland Museum's Mummy: Secrets of the Tomb exhibition, making it the museum's most popular touring exhibition ever. Exclusive to Brisbane, the exhibition was extended to meet demand. A record average visitation of 4,450 per day and an overall 565,000 visitors attended the seventh Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art at the Queensland Art Gallery's Gallery of Modern Art. This flagship event featured 77 artists from 27 countries. Box office takings in excess of \$1.2 million at the 2012 Brisbane Festival and a record 90-plus sell-out performances were another highlight. The Bolshoi Ballet, which I

mentioned before, was seen by more than 29,000 people, with the 12 shows sold out. This number includes the 6,000 people around the state who saw the live simulcast of *Le Corsaire* to nine venues around Queensland. In a great boost for cultural tourism from the state, 22.4 per cent of the audiences travelled to Brisbane from around Queensland to see the Bolshoi while 16.3 per cent of the audiences came from interstate.

Sales of \$600,000 of Indigenous art from more than 300 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists occurred through the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, or CIAF. More than 9,000 people attended CIAF and its satellite programs, including 58 curators and collectors from around the world, which was a highlight. 2013 has seen the announcement of a new arts and cultural investment framework, and that marks a new direction in funding for the arts in Queensland by streamlining funding categories and cutting red tape. We have also this year recognised culture champions to celebrate our culture heroes and unearth all of those Queenslanders who are arts heroes in their own communities. That has begun and so far there has been more than 80 culture champions appointed, with nominations coming from across Queensland. That is not only the well-known culture champions; it is the little people in small communities who really are driving arts in their community. So we are looking to deliver more great arts and culture for Queensland in 2013-14. We are off to a great start with the Queensland Music Festival, where I was pleased to be part of the Guinness world record which was broken for the world's biggest orchestra at Suncorp Stadium—my good self on the snare drum; the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville, which opens this week; CIAF Presents in August; and Articulate, the regional arts conference also to be held in August. So there are some great things still to come.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That draws to a close this block of questions. I call on the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good evening, Minister.

Mr WALKER: Good evening, Ms Trad.

Ms TRAD: Minister, my first couple of questions are actually directed to the CEO of Screen Queensland if he is here, and I understand from Madam Chair that he is. If I could ask that he come to the table.

Mr WALKER: He is here. I will ask him to come to the table.

Ms TRAD: Good evening, Mr Lowe. Just referring to page 15 of the SDS, I understand that Screen Queensland is a statutory entity administered by DSITIA and that you are now the chief executive officer of that organisation; is that right?

Mr Lowe: That's right.

Ms TRAD: Can you please advise the committee when you were interviewed for the appointment and the date of your appointment?

Mr Lowe: I would have to take the exact date on notice, but my appointment was around about the end of August 2012. The interviews would have been, I believe, in June, but I would have to check those exact dates.

Ms TRAD: If you could that would be great.

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, could you explain to the committee how your question is actually relevant to our consideration of the budget estimates?

Ms TRAD: Well, because Screen Queensland has a budget of \$19 million of taxpayer funds. It is headed by Mr Lowe and I think I am entitled to ask a question about his appointment. My second question in relation to Screen Queensland is after the former estimates, I think it was in December last year, the former minister for the arts released a press release advising that *Sea Hawk* would be a foreign film production project that the Queensland government would be pursuing and that Screen Queensland would be part of that. I assume Screen Queensland wasn't successful in that?

Mr Lowe: I wouldn't say it wasn't successful. With *Sea Hawk*, that project has not yet gone into production. The latest information we had from LA is that the project is still targeted for Australian production. They still haven't, I believe, got full finance and sorted out their distribution arrangements. When they do I believe they will be coming to Australia and looking particularly at Queensland alongside other competitive bids from the other states. So the position is very much as it was in December except there has been delays, which is very common in the film industry.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Lowe. So you are still in the mix?

Mr Lowe: We are very much so. The position is pretty much the same except there's been long delays and that is quite common in film.

Ms TRAD: I appreciate that.

Mr WALKER: Madam Chair, if I could just intervene, the *Sea Hawk* matter I think is presently before CBRC or about to go to CBRC and there are commercial-in-confidence matters around it.

Ms TRAD: I don't want the details, Minister. I appreciate that. Mr Lowe, just in terms of *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*, which was an announcement, is Screen Queensland also bidding for production locations for that film?

Mr Lowe: Very much so, yes. Again the situation is rather similar except that there have been delays in LA. We have been advised by Disney the delays are down to casting issues. It is a film of over \$200 million so the choice of principal cast is absolutely critical, as is the director. So often one has to wait for availability of the director, which is David Fincher. He is now making another film. With the cast, it again depends on the window of availability of those particularly top actors. There have been some delays accordingly. We have been advised by top Disney executives that they are looking at still making the film in 2014, with Queensland one of the favoured locations to produce the film. So again the position is very much as it was: that we are bidding competitively for production of the film in Queensland and feel very optimistic about that.

Ms TRAD: Great. Thank you. Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS and the strengthening the economic outcomes of Queensland through a vibrant and creative arts and cultural sector. Can you advise what the total for foreign movie production investment in Queensland was for the last financial year?

Mr WALKER: The total foreign movie production?

Ms TRAD: Yes.

Mr WALKER: Queensland does have a substantial track record in producing international film and TV in Australia largely due to the Gold Coast studio complex which was established in the 1980s and continued Queensland government support since that time. But it is true that all Australian states are experiencing a downturn in foreign production. There were no foreign productions in Queensland during 2012-13. In 2011-12 foreign production was \$21 million, and that is below the six-year average of \$52 million. Clearly the strength of the Australian dollar was not helpful in that regard. It is a less favourable exchange rate for US production and pushes their costs up and one would hope that the change in that dollar strength may improve the situation.

Ms TRAD: Sorry, Minister. Just to clarify. For 2011-12 it was \$21 million?

Mr WALKER: That's correct.

Ms TRAD: For 2012-13 zero dollars?

Mr WALKER: Correct.

Ms TRAD: Can you or your director-general—and I appreciate that both of you were not in your current positions at the time—advise the committee who was on the selection panel for the appointment of Mr Lowe and how many applicants applied for the position?

Mr WALKER: I will just see if we—

CHAIR: Minister, I do question whether that actually refers to this budget estimates hearing.

Mr WALKER: Certainly it would seem to me that it doesn't and I would take that point and ask for your ruling on that.

CHAIR: I actually would rule that question out of order.

Ms TRAD: Madam Chair, with all due respect, we are talking about a statutory entity that is administered by the minister's department. We are talking about the leadership of that statutory entity and, quite frankly, I think that this is exactly where we should be talking about the leadership and the executive leadership of that organisation.

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, I believe that is a question that you can put to the parliament; I do not believe that it is part of an estimates hearing.

Ms TRAD: Well, Madam Chair, with all due respect, I do not think that's right and I think that you're trying to assist the minister avoid answering the question.

CHAIR: Far from it.

Ms TRAD: If you are happy to answer it, Minister, I think you should.

Mr WALKER: Madam Chair, I think there is a need to draw a line somewhere and it does seem to me that that doesn't deal with the current estimates. It is a matter of management. If the member has an issue in relation to Screen Queensland's performance or the CEO's performance that relates to the current period and it is a performance related thing she is welcome to ask, as she has just asked a number of questions in that sort of vein. So I would take the point and ask that you rule the question out of order.

CHAIR: I do rule the question out of order. Would you like to go to the next question?

Ms TRAD: Of course, Madam Chair. I will, of course, go to the next question, but considering that we have gone from \$56 million, I think you said, to \$21 million to zero dollars in terms of foreign film production in Queensland, I think the question about the leadership of Screen Queensland is a very pertinent question, Minister.

In relation to the SDS generally speaking, you have mentioned figures in terms of attendance and projected attendance for a whole range of things: the Bolshoi Ballet, the APT. Where in the SDS are these figures? Where are the attendance figures from last year that you have referred to?

Mr WALKER: Those figures have been provided to me by my department.

Ms TRAD: But they don't actually appear in any of the performance measures for any of the entities that govern these exhibitions or performances, do they?

Mr WALKER: I am advised, and I can't quickly go to it, that the ones in relation to QPAC attendance I think are in the notes. and I am just getting that handed to me to draw your attention to that. If I could just have a moment, Madam Chair?

CHAIR: Yes, Minister.

Mr WALKER: The corporate figure for attendance is on page 76 of the statement under the heading 'Service Area: Arts and Culture Services' which is the level of attendance and participation in subsidised arts sector events which shows a total of 4,003,075 people attending in the 2012-13 year. If the member wishes, I am happy to take on notice as to whether we can get a further breakdown of that for her.

Ms TRAD: I would like that further breakdown if you are prepared to take that on notice. That would be very helpful.

Mr WALKER: I am happy to do that.

Ms TRAD: But I guess the issue that I would like to raise is that the performance measures from last year's SDS compared to this year's SDS are significantly different. Quite a number of performance measures have been dropped right across the statutory authorities. For example, for the art gallery alone you have gone from five measures to three, in the library from 10 measures to two, in the museum from 14 measures to two measures and in performing arts 10 measures to two measures. I accept that there is a global figure for visitation across all of the agencies but, quite frankly, I find it concerning that we are actually not measuring the visitors to every institution. What we do not measure we do not fund and I want an explanation as to why the measures have been contracted in this way.

Mr WALKER: I thank the member for that question. The government is certainly committed to improving the level of service that we provide to the public and we do need to measure service delivery better, measuring both efficiency and effectiveness. In the 2013-14 Service Delivery Statements 42 measures were discontinued across the arts portfolio but five new measures were introduced to ensure that Arts Queensland, the corporate administration agency and four arts statutory bodies, can better measure their effectiveness and their efficiency in delivering arts and cultural services to the people of Queensland. I might ask Mr Hill, the acting deputy director-general of the Arts area, to take that issue further for you.

Mr Hill: Thank you, Minister. The basic revision of performance indicators was a whole-of-government initiative. We have been asked to provide two performance measures going forward, which is in relation to effectiveness and efficiency, so that is the format we followed for the SDS this year.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Hill.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, I think. Minister, I find it perturbing actually that we are not measuring things like the number of visitors to the art gallery as a stand-alone entity. I find it disturbing that we are not measuring the number of schoolchildren who attend exhibitions at the museum. It appears to

me that internally you are measuring it but you are not providing that information externally through the budget process which does concern me quite considerably. This is a government that purports, through quite a significant amount of rhetoric, that it is open and transparent.

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, I appreciate your question, but you are quoting a lot of your opinions which is actually not meant to be part of a question.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do understand that I am entitled to contextualise my question. Just to finish that off, Minister, what you are saying is across the Arts portfolio you have discontinued 46 measures and introduced five; is that what you are saying?

Mr WALKER: Madam Chair, what I said was that in the Service Delivery Statements 42 measures were discontinued and five new ones were introduced. I thought that Mr Hill made it clear that this was a matter of conforming with a whole-of-government way of reporting measures. I can reassure the member, because I can understand her concern if she felt there is an issue with transparency, which she described as rhetoric—I don't believe it is rhetoric at all—there is real transparency in these matters, and certainly the annual reports of the various organisations will continue to report many figures, including those that the honourable member may be seeking. I think she may be a little caught up in what appears in the SDS, which is a more structured set of measures taken on a whole-of-government basis which my department has fallen in line with. But there will be no lack of transparency in respect of other reporting mechanisms such as the reports. What I can say, Madam Chair, is that the state of what is happening particularly in the cultural precinct and with our majors is such that they will not be shy in reporting how many people are coming through the doors because the results are excellent and there is plenty of good news to be had.

Ms TRAD: I understand that they may be shy in terms of reporting declines in attendance, which is the real issue.

CHAIR: That is an opinion again, member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Yes, it is an opinion, and here is the question—

Mr LATTER: Point of order. The member has given an opinion and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Ms TRAD: It wasn't offensive.

CHAIR: It is not something to be withdrawn. Thank you, member for Waterford.

Ms TRAD: Minister, you referred to the grants officer that has been appointed internally in the department. What level is the grants officer, can I ask?

Mr WALKER: I will check that information. I am informed that the level is an AO7.

CHAIR: Thank you. The time has expired for non-government questions in this block. I now call the member for Lytton.

Mr SYMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I refer to page 5 of the SDS. Minister, can you outline the progress of the new Arts Investment Advisory Board in developing the Arts for all Queenslanders policy?

Mr WALKER: I thank the honourable member for that question. The Arts Investment Advisory Board is an important new body that provides the government with expert advice on arts and cultural policy and investment in Queensland. The board has met on five occasions since being appointed in February 2013. I was pleased to attend its first meeting for a short time and to see the board get underway. It has made a substantial contribution in a range of areas, including considering applications under the Super Star Fund and providing advice on all aspects of the new arts and cultural investment framework. The board is made up of eight members and together they bring a wealth of experience and skills in the arts, education, business and financial areas.

Recently I was pleased to appoint to the board Ms Christine Pulvirenti, who brings significant expertise in working with regional communities. As I have already explained in answer to a number of questions, that is key to the government's Arts for all Queenslanders agenda. During 2013, the board will be involved with Arts Queensland's development of the Arts for all Queenslanders strategy and it will ultimately advise me on a draft strategy and finalise that strategy. When released in December 2013, the five-year strategy will outline actions for the government and the sector to deliver growth to the arts sector, a strong community of arts and recognition for Queensland as a cultural tourism hub.

In February 2013, the Queensland government announced the development of the Arts for all Queenslanders strategy. That strategy is to do three things: it is to grow the arts sector, to foster a community of arts and to develop Queensland as a cultural tourism hub. Those strategy drivers

recognise that the arts and cultural sector is a vital part of our state's cultural life, that the arts are an important part of our daily lives and that Queensland arts offer unique cultural experiences for visitors to our state's diverse regions. The first stage of consultation was between February and April 2013 and that included an online survey and a workshop with representatives from Queensland's arts and cultural sector, tertiary education institutions and local government. To date, over 500 Queenslanders have engaged with the strategy discussion through forums held across Queensland and online discussions. This engagement of Queenslanders' ideas and experiences provides valuable input into strategy development. I was pleased to be to attend the Townsville workshop and I am planning to attend the Ipswich workshop in the next week or so.

The feedback has come in. There is now first stage strategy consultation happening and the discussion paper is an important part of how the consultation will now pan out. It asks questions about the arts and cultural sector and what Queensland communities can do in partnership with the Queensland government through a connection with people throughout Queensland so that all Queenslanders can experience the arts in their lives. That is an important thing. The discussion paper is on the Arts Queensland website, as is the survey and the workshop data from the stage 1 consultation. We are certainly keen to hear the voice of Queenslanders as we develop this policy vision. The consultation invites people to read the discussion paper, to do an online survey, to make a written submission or to talk to someone directly within Arts Queensland in relation to their feedback. In addition, a number of blog posts by industry thinkers and practitioners has been commissioned to engage the sector in deeper conversation on various aspects of the ongoing discussion.

The Arts for all Queenslanders strategy is for all Queenslanders as arts and cultural audiences, participants, creators and makers. The Queensland government wants to ensure that everyone has an opportunity in the arts and is developing the strategy to do just that. It is going to build on Queenslanders' love of the arts and the value we place on our own participation in creative activity, as well as our appreciation of the inspiring works of our artists. The Arts Investment Advisory Board is attending consultation workshops, perusing the consultation and providing feedback on the developing strategy. The board will consider a final draft of the strategy before it seeks government endorsement for that in December 2013.

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

Mr LATTER: The minister knows well that I have a fondness for the arts. In fact, regularly I enjoy performances from my local Beenleigh Theatre Group and the Phoenix Ensemble. I have been fortunate enough to enjoy performances from the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and ballet performances in both Brisbane and on the Gold Coast. Minister, to contextualise my question, I note that we are not all as fortunate as I am. I refer to page 5 of the SDS and ask the minister to outline how the government is delivering arts and cultural services for regional communities across Queensland?

Mr WALKER: I thank the honourable member for that question. Certainly it is a theme that I come back to again and again in speaking about the arts throughout Queensland, because regional artists and regional arts organisations and projects are key to the Newman government's policy. We have been proud to invest \$11.3 million in 2012-13 into regional artists, organisations and programs. Highlights of that include \$2.15 million to regional arts projects with public outcomes; \$2.1 million to regional small to medium arts organisations; \$600,000 for the Creative Recovery—Building Resilience initiative, which will deliver arts and culture projects to flood devastated regions across Queensland, including Bundaberg, Maryborough, Rockhampton and the Lockyer Valley. That is a very important thing. I see the member for Burnett acknowledging that. I was pleased to go to Bundaberg to launch that at the beautifully named BRAG, the Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery, and to see the great things that are being done there already, which this funding will help. For example, people are digitally recording their stories of the floods. It is a wonderful thing for them, firstly, to be able to express that and, secondly, to be able to create a record for their communities and their children. When the kids say, 'Mum, did the flood really come up to here?', you will be able to see through this digital record that it certainly did. That is a very important thing. The regions of Bundaberg, Maryborough, Rockhampton, the Lockyer Valley and Gympie received some funding via that program.

So far in 2013, the government's touring fund has supported up to 34 tours and that will reach 100 different regional Queensland communities. In addition, there are the regional outreach programs of the arts statutory bodies, the major performing arts organisations and the Queensland Music Festival, which are providing audiences across Queensland with quality arts and cultural experiences. For example, the Queensland Art Gallery took the Kids' APT7 on Tour program to a record 71

regional and remote Queensland locations, allowing engagement with and insights into contemporary art across the Asia-Pacific region. In line with the government's Arts for all Queenslanders commitment, support for regional arts and quality arts and cultural experiences across Queensland is going to continue in 2013-14. The \$3 million four-year Boost to Touring Fund, which I spoke about earlier, will ensure that Queenslanders experience arts and culture in their own communities. The Boost to Touring Fund is already stimulating regional Queensland touring activity with a significant increase in audience numbers through subsidised touring activity. I went through the actual figures in answer to earlier questions, so I will not repeat them now.

A sum of \$2.33 million is allocated for the Regional Arts Development Fund, or RADF grants, and the Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund programs. Those are very valuable programs that represent a significant ongoing partnership with local councils across Queensland for the people of Queensland. The Rockhampton Regional Council will host Articulate 2013, a major regional arts and cultural conference next month. The Arts Investment Advisory Board will be holding its August meeting in Rockhampton to coincide with the conference so that they can hear firsthand the regional perspective about arts and culture.

Regional artists and organisations are invited to apply for funding through the four funds under the new arts and cultural investment framework. The arts statutory bodies and major performing arts organisations will build on their strong regional outreach programs of 2012-13. In 2013-14, the State Library will support regional development by investing \$22.33 million in public library collections and services, and delivering state-wide literacy programs. The Queensland Art Gallery will continue the extensive regional Queensland tours of exhibitions *Ah Xian*, *Metaphysica* and *Lloyd Rees: Light and Life*. The Queensland Museum will enhance revenue and tourism opportunities through the Have a Go festival at the Cobb & Co. Museum in Toowoomba in 2014 and through a new reef themed experience at the Museum of Tropical Queensland in Townsville, which draws on its world-class coral collection and research. In August 2013, Opera Queensland will tour *Waltzing Our Matilda* to eight regional centres in association with Art Tour. It will also embark on a major regional engagement, culminating in a regional tour of a popular operatic work in 2014.

I am certainly pleased to see such a wide range of activities occurring in the regions. I take the member for Waterford's point that not all in Queensland are as fortunate as those who live close to the capital or major cities. Therefore, it is great to see the arts being taken out to people and fulfilling that Arts for all Queenslanders policy.

CHAIR: Minister, could you outline how the government is supporting our major performing arts companies?

Mr WALKER: The government certainly recognises the importance of our four major performing arts companies: the Queensland Ballet, Opera Queensland, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and the Queensland Theatre Company. The majors, as they are known, play a key role in generating quality seasons, regional engagement and supporting cultural tourism. They also play an important role as art-form development leaders and they deliver significant regional, community and education programs. State funding has been maintained in the current budget so our flagship companies do not lose momentum in delivering the high standard of work that they do. The majors are funded through a three-year tripartite agreement with the Australia Council for the Arts. Funding for the calendar year 2013 is \$10.96 million and the financial year 2012-13 equivalent is \$10.8 million.

The Queensland Ballet has also been the first recipient of the government's new Super Star Fund. On 14 May, I announced that \$3,000 funding of the award for the ballet for the *Romeo and Juliet* performance about which I spoke earlier.

The Queensland Symphony Orchestra moved into its great new premises at the ABC building at South Bank in December 2012. The relocation project was supported by a \$9 million investment from the Australian government, \$3.5 million from the Queensland government and a further \$2.8 million generated by the QSO's own fundraising initiatives. A new chief executive officer of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra was announced on 3 June 2013. Sophie Galaise is one of the world's leading orchestra executives. Most recently, she was the executive director of Canada's famed Orchestre symphonique de Quebec, or the Quebec Symphony Orchestra, which is probably easier for me to say.

The Queensland Theatre Company's programs have extended beyond its main-stage performances with significant youth education and regional outreach programs. There are opportunities for independent artists and innovative new work through its The GreenHouse program in the Bille Brown Studio and a new community engagement initiative with young people in the Logan

region. Peter Quilter's poignant *End of the Rainbow* was the second show in the QTC's 2013 season and was co-produced with QPAC. Christen O'Leary and Hayden Spencer, the lead actors in *End of the Rainbow*, have both been nominated for a Helpmann Award. Christen has been nominated for best actress in a play and Hayden Spencer has been nominated for best supporting actor in a play. It was tremendous to go and see that. It a very moving performance by all involved. The Queensland Theatre Company will present, as a major production, *Trollop* by the winner of the 2012 Premier's drama awards, Brisbane playwright Maxine Mellor, from 1 to 17 August 2013 at The GreenHouse.

Under the artistic direction of Lindy Hume, Opera Queensland has committed to developing production partnerships with small to medium sized performing arts companies, such as the Camerata of St John's and Dancenorth. The new production of *Abandon* is being presented in Townsville at the same time as the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, which starts tomorrow night. Opera Queensland also aims to form new offshore partnerships to extend its artistic networks and repertoire. Its great production of *Cinderella* is a co-production with the NBR New Zealand Opera and will, in fact, tour there next year or the year after—I cannot recall. There is a great exchange arrangement between those two opera companies to share costs and, therefore, be able to present more to their audiences at a better-value-for-money arrangement.

In 2013-14, there will be more great work from those great Queensland performing arts companies. Our major performing arts companies are bringing outstanding productions to communities across Queensland with Opera Queensland's *Waltzing Our Matilda*, the Queensland Ballet's tour of *Giselle*—and I was glad to be at the opening night in Toowoomba this year—and *Cinderella* next year, and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra tours to Gladstone, Rockhampton and Mackay in August.

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

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, could you please advise the committee how much was expended on overseas travel by staff within Arts Queensland and/or related entities for the past financial year? I appreciate that you might need to take the rest on notice, but can you please provide a list outlining each trip and cost broken down by travel, accommodation venues and meal expenses, et cetera?

Mr WALKER: I am just looking at the information we have here. I have just been handed some of the information which the honourable member might need, but I could probably give the detail on notice. I can give the summary figures. The domestic travel for 2012-13 actual was \$885,107. International travel for the same period was \$191,564. The balance of the information, the detail, as far as I can provide, I will take on notice. I have been given some information which may satisfy the honourable member's question. Perhaps if I could table that and the honourable member might indicate whether that is sufficient for her purposes.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate that.

CHAIR: I believe you have to seek permission to table that.

Mr WALKER: I am sorry. I do apologise for being so forward. I will seek permission.

CHAIR: Permission is granted.

Ms TRAD: Minister, I refer to page 5 of the SDS and the Arts for All Queenslanders strategy. I have had a look through the strategy and I note that there is a very ambitious target of reaching a \$30 billion spend for cultural tourism overnight stays in Queensland by the year 2020. Minister, can you advise what the figure was for the last financial year in terms of overnight cultural visitor stays in Queensland?

Mr WALKER: I think that is probably a question more appropriately directed to my colleague the Minister for Tourism. I think that would be information held by her department rather than mine, I am afraid.

Ms TRAD: So the Minister for Tourism would collate those figures and that data?

Mr WALKER: I would not like to speak for her. I just know that we do not collect that data. I will just double-check that, but I think that is the case. I am advised that that it is the case that we do not collect that data.

Ms TRAD: Thank you for that. I will ask the Minister for Tourism about that. Can you talk me through the modelling behind the \$30 billion target?

Mr WALKER: I am just wondering about the relevance of this question to the estimates. I think it is relevant to the strategy paper, but that is not what we are debating today. I would ask for your ruling as to whether that is relevant to this committee's estimates hearing.

CHAIR: Can you explain the relevance of that to the budget considerations, member for South Brisbane?

Ms TRAD: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Obviously the strategy is listed in the SDS as a work project for the 2013-14 year. I also note that there are a number of key action items in relation to the strategy. It looks at reforming the arts investment model. It looks at growing great cultural events and experiences. Obviously this strategy will need funding. It will obviously require programs to be aligned internally within the agency to support the ambitions of the strategy. I am just trying to get a sense of how much institutional investment there is in the strategy and how much funding there will be to get this strategy up and running and make it a success. I think that aiming for a cultural spend in Queensland is a very noble target. I just want to know how you are going to get there?

Mr WALKER: If the question is how are we going to get there and what is our strategy, I am happy to answer that. I think the honourable member may have asked last time how we got to the figure which I am not sure is relevant. I am happy to answer on the basis of how do we intend to get there and what our aim is in that regard.

Ms TRAD: Obviously, but \$30 billion is a big spend. It is significant when you consider how much is currently being spent.

Mr WALKER: If I can just start by saying that cultural tourism has certainly been identified by us as a key niche market to contribute to the government's target of increasing visitor expenditure to \$30 billion by 2020. My understanding is that that \$30 billion is a figure owned by tourism and that we are aiming to contribute towards that.

Ms TRAD: Is it 30 million or billion?

Mr WALKER: \$30 billion. Arts Queensland is working closely with the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games to ensure Queensland's unique cultural tourism experiences feature in major initiatives like DestinationQ, which is coming up again shortly. I will in a moment hand over to Mr Hill to explain a little more. One of the things we have signed up to in this area is the Cultural Precinct Strategy, which was launched in June this year. That has cultural tourism at its heart.

At the moment, as you know, we have great organisations over there doing great work in their individual buildings. The concept is being able to have them work more closely together. For example, if the Bolshoi is on at QPAC we could have a Russian art exhibition and a Russian literature exhibition and perhaps Russia food and entertainment in the open areas between the buildings.

Ms TRAD: An emersion strategy even.

Mr WALKER: All of that goes towards building cultural tourism. One of the things we have to do is make the most of that great precinct which, unlike other capital cities, has all the arts organisations clustered together. That is an example of what we in Arts Queensland are doing to add our bit to that target that you spoke of. I will ask Mr Hill if he could take the answer further.

Mr Hill: In relation to cultural tourism, one key initiative we launched in June was the Cultural Precinct Strategy. That involves working with arts statutory bodies at the cultural precinct. There are action areas that we have identified. The key one in relation to the actual statutory bodies is in relation to programming and partnerships. We will work with them on how we enhance those to present the precinct as a destination to tourists.

Within the Arts for All Queenslanders strategy itself, you may be aware the discussion paper is currently out for consultation. One of the key action areas within the discussion paper is to grow great arts and cultural events and experiences. The feedback we get from that discussion paper will help inform that further.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Hill. Minister, in relation to the strategy which is currently out for consultation, when does the consultation conclude?

Mr WALKER: The strategy consultation and development is due by 30 August this year. Then the strategy approval is due by the end of the year. Can I just go back on a couple of things, if I may. Just to clarify in case it was not clear, the \$30 billion figure is not a cultural tourism figure; it is a tourism figure to which cultural tourism is to contribute. I may not have made that clear. If I could just apologise, I have been told that I may have said that the Queensland Ballet contribution from the Super Star Fund was \$3,000 when it was actually \$300,000. I apologise if I pirouetted through that too quickly.

Ms TRAD: Minister, and please feel free to defer to a departmental officer if that is more appropriate, could you advise of the consultation strategy around the Arts for All Queenslanders strategy?

Mr WALKER: I will again defer to Mr Hill on that. I have experienced it myself. I went to Townsville a couple of weeks ago. To give you the flavour of it, I can tell you that we had 50 local arts people there. There was a good program developed by Arts Queensland by way of getting the consultation to happen. There was an overall review of the strategy. We then split into groups to discuss the various questions that were posited and then we went back for feedback. I have since received a collated document on what the people in Townsville had to say. The same thing will happen in Ipswich when I go there next week. Mr Hill might be able to talk about it in a more structured way.

Mr Hill: Certainly. The consultation at the moment is based around the discussion paper which asks for commentary on the four action areas. Initially in February we basically released a survey to establish a framework for consultation. We received over 300 responses to that survey. We have now built the discussion on those. There are four key action areas. I can highlight them, if you wish.

Ms TRAD: No.

Mr Hill: We are asking people to provide feedback to those—people from all quarters, not just those we fund.

Ms TRAD: I should have perhaps clarified it a bit more. How many regional consultation events will you have? Are you consulting with the Academy for Creative Industries? I basically wanted to know who is being consulted and where the consultations are happening?

Mr Hill: That is a good question. I do not have the exact number of workshops we are having but they are not just based in Brisbane. They will be in the regions too. They will involve a wide range of stakeholders, including universities et cetera. I can provide you with the specific detail of where we are and when.

Mr WALKER: Perhaps I could take the specific detail on notice. Another example that might help the honourable member is that I went to Yungabar with the youth Arts Queensland group. There were about 40 young people involved in the arts there, including young disabled artists. They certainly raised a whole lot of new perspectives for me that I had not thought of before. They were an interesting group who had a position as people involved in youth arts. It was an interesting way for me to hear it other than in a regional way. We will certainly get the detail for you. That is another example of the sort of consultation that is happening.

Ms TRAD: Minister, in relation to page 9 of the SDS which indicates there is an overall reduction of staff in the arts and cultural space in the year to come—I think it is three FTEs; a two per cent reduction in the agency—can you please advise where these positions will be lost?

Mr WALKER: I will defer to Mr Hill, if I may.

Mr Hill: Certainly. In relation to the three FTE reductions, one position is in our Cairns office—we have done some restructuring there—one is in our programs area and the one will be within our car park roster.

Ms TRAD: Minister, I want to go back to your response in relation to the grants officer who has been put in to assist arts organisations bid for grants outside Queensland. I guess that is to seek philanthropic grants or business grants? Is it other government sources of funds?

Mr WALKER: I will get Mr Hill to answer that.

Mr Hill: It is basically to try to connect interested parties to all sorts of funding. It can be philanthropic sources or foundations out there offering rounds. It is basically a central hub of information to connect people to.

Ms TRAD: I guess I am trying to ascertain whether one A07 in the agency dedicated to fulfilling that role will be sufficient particularly considering that the strategy aims to increase the entrepreneurship of arts organisations. I am wondering whether that is an insufficient allocation in order to do the job that you are asking the arts sector to do which is step up, be more entrepreneurial and access more funding outside Queensland?

Mr WALKER: I think the point that the honourable member makes is a good point. I am certainly prepared to take that under review, because I think we do have a particularly good officer fulfilling that function at the moment. A number of honourable members have spoken to me because she has delivered in their area or for an arts organisation in their area. So I think we have a super performer there at the moment as well, so that helped. The area that the honourable member is taking us to of arts funding is certainly something that we see changing before our very eyes. The

federal government is certainly looking at putting more money into creative partnerships, which is the area where the arts will go out and make contact with philanthropy and business. I think her point is a reasonable one.

Certainly one of the four action areas in the Arts for all Queenslanders plan is strengthening the entrepreneurial capacity of the arts and cultural sector. So it probably needs to be looked at in the light of that. Having said that we will review it, we all know that the budgetary constraints are tight. There are reasons for that that have been gone into in the House many a time. But this government has to work within certain constraints, and we are always balancing the need to deliver our budgetary outcomes with what are often good ideas and good outcomes that have to be tailored to that measure.

CHAIR: I now call the member for Albert.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Can the minister outline for the committee how he is ensuring the future of the very successful Cairns Indigenous Art Fair and supporting Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture?

Mr WALKER: Thank you for that question because we certainly value the unique and dynamic arts and cultures of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I always think that we are the lucky state in that we can legitimately claim both streams of culture, both our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, as part of Queensland's heritage, and that is a unique thing obviously within the Commonwealth. So we do recognise the unique position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our culture and history.

In 2013-14, \$4.982 million has been allocated to Backing Indigenous Arts and Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund programs, plus the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts. That includes support from Training Queensland to the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts and funding to support the *CIAF Presents* program.

The focus of all of this investment is on increasing employment and professional development opportunities, building a viable and ethical Indigenous arts industry, promoting Indigenous artists and their cultures, and growing new markets for their work. I have been pleased to see quite a number of exhibitions. At QAGOMA at the moment there is the 'My Country: I Still Call Australia Home' exhibition. I was lucky on Thursday Island to see the Gab Titui arts centre, which is a fantastic Indigenous centre. It was still getting rebuilt while I was there, and I have a feeling it opens tonight or maybe it opened last night, but it is happening very soon. It is a great environment for displaying not only the traditional art of that area but contemporary Aboriginal art as well which is always an interesting mix.

The Cairns Indigenous Art Fair attracts thousands of visitors to Far North Queensland with its blend of art market and celebration of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The year of 2013 marks a new era for the award-winning Cairns Indigenous Art Fair. To secure a vibrant and viable future for this very successful event, the delivery of CIAF is being transitioned from Arts Queensland this year, with CIAF returning in 2014 bigger and better than ever. This transition will allow CIAF to expand its revenue-raising options and enable it to grow.

A task force has been established to advise me on the best future governance and delivery models for CIAF. The task force members include Ms Henrietta Fourmile Marrie, who is the chair and co-patron of CIAF; Councillor Bob Manning, the Mayor of Cairns Regional Council; Mr Jim Cousins AO—Jim is resident in Melbourne and also, I think, the chair of the Australian Ballet; he is there to add an Australian dimension beyond Far North Queensland or North Queensland or Queensland, because this is a festival that is bigger than just the local area—Mr Cameron Costello, who is the former general manager of CIAF and an Indigenous community member of note; and also representatives from Tourism and Events Queensland and Arts Queensland.

I was pleased to meet Henrietta and Bob in Cairns some time ago. Then the whole of the advisory task force came down and met me a month or six weeks ago just to let me know where they were at, and they are certainly progressing things very well. There is much enthusiasm for moving to this new model, as big an ask as that is going to be. It is going to be a big ask but it is an important one. It is a chance for CIAF to lift itself out of the short pants and into the long pants sort of era. The government has allocated \$1.568 million to ensure the future success of CIAF, and I am expecting the new arrangements to be in place by December this year.

To continue the momentum of CIAF during this transition, a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture called *CIAF Presents* is being held in Cairns from 15 to 18 August 2013, and I am very much looking forward to going up to see that. It is being delivered in

partnership with the Cairns Regional Council, with local arts and cultural organisations and with Indigenous communities. There will be an exciting program of performances, exhibitions and forums at various venues across Cairns. Dan Sultan is performing at the UMI Arts Big Talk One Fire concert on 15 August and Cairns Regional Gallery has exhibitions by senior artists Roy McIvor and Ken Thaiday Senior. Top chefs will also be coming to join in the Gimuy Fish and Food Festival. So that will be a great event in this transition period.

The Indigenous Art Centre Alliance is hosting the kinship exhibition and markets at the Tanks Arts Centre and the dynamic works of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists will be on show at Canopy Artspace and KickArts Contemporary Arts. So the government is supporting CIAF as Australia's premier Indigenous art fair.

CHAIR: I call the member for Lytton.

Mr SYMES: Can the minister please tell the committee how the Queensland Music Festival is delivering for communities across Queensland?

Mr WALKER: I am very pleased to answer the question from the honourable member. The Queensland Music Festival is providing great quality music experiences for Queenslanders in line with the government's Arts for all Queenslanders commitment, which is of course to deliver arts and culture experiences to more Queenslanders.

Hundreds of events across 35 communities are being delivered as part of the Queensland Music Festival, and the festival is made possible through partnerships between Arts Queensland, the Queensland Music Festival, local government and corporate partners. The festival started on 12 July and runs through to the 28th. I think they might have actually cheated and held one event just before the 12th—but basically from 12 to 28 July. For 17 days the festival will create unique musical experiences, connecting people with place and community and highlighting the richness and variety of Queensland's many regions.

I should put in a particular word of thanks and praise to James Morrison, who is leading the festival. He is a tremendously enthusiastic fellow who does so much behind the scenes as well as on stage and, to me, has been very inspiring in what he is doing.

The festival provides opportunities for large-scale community participation in Gladstone, Tambo and Mount Isa, as well as for communities as diverse as Birdsville, Normanton, Goondiwindi and Cunnamulla, to experience nationally and indeed internationally renowned artists. Events in the 2013 festival also include music and cultural events in Mackay, Roma, Logan, Winton, Dalby, Moranbah, Emerald and in Indigenous communities such as Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Yarrabah.

One of the highlights to date, as I mentioned before—not wanting to blow my own trumpet again, so to speak—was when 7,223 people came together on Sunday, 13 July to create record-breaking music history through the 'World's Biggest Orchestra'. There was really an electric atmosphere at Suncorp Stadium. Indeed I came into town first and did some work and walked up to the mall to buy some lunch. It was just amazing to see the sea of blue shirts. There were families there. A bloke said to me that he had a 100-year-old trumpet that he was taking to play. There was a great feeling when kids, parents, grandparents and professional musicians packed a number of the stands at the home of rugby league to participate in this successful world record attempt. We beat the Canadian city of Vancouver, which had previously held the record of 6,452 set in the year 2000. The most amazing thing about it was that it actually sounded all right. I thought it may in fact sound like half-time at the State of Origin when we all got playing, but it was recognisably tuneful. My Facebook page is the place to go if you want to see it.

Other highlights include a special Queensland Music Festival performance on Sunday, 14 July by Ailan Kores, which will travel to Brisbane to perform their joyous and iconic devotional pieces. Singers from six islands across the Torres Strait, the Ailan Kores came together for QMF in 2011 to perform an evening of sacred choral music. I am sure all of us have been inspired by those soaring melodies of the Torres Strait Islanders singing, particularly in a devotional context.

On Thursday Island Ailan Kores performed with the Queensland Youth Orchestra in a celebration of the unity and diversity of Torres Strait culture. The combined voices performed a program of local hymns, startlingly transformed to express their tradition of exuberant music worship. The works were reinterpreted again by composer Damian Barbeler, and Alison Rogers returns to conduct Ailan Kores at St Andrews Uniting Church here in Brisbane. With songs chosen from the eastern, central and western language groups, the choral works reflect the Torres Strait's cultural and linguistic distinctiveness.

Brisbane also showcased the best of Australian singing talent last Friday and Saturday nights with *How Deep is Your Love*, a tribute show to Queensland's legendary Gibb brothers, known as the Bee Gees. Audiences enjoyed spectacular performances by some of Australia's and Queensland's best vocal talent. Christine Anu, Tina Arena and Anthony Callea were involved in that.

Brisbane audiences also experienced in-demand international talent, including vocal ensemble Take 6 and the Brodsky Quartet, which performed at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre and the Brisbane Powerhouse.

So this is a great festival for everyone. All Queenslanders are invited to be part of it and you have a couple of days still to do so.

CHAIR: I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: Minister, I know we briefly touched on the Creative Recovery activities in Bundaberg, but I would like you to expand on that if you could and talk more about how this will assist Queenslanders in recovering after the devastating events of Cyclone Oswald?

Mr WALKER: I thank the honourable member, and I particularly acknowledge his obviously personal and keen interest in what is happening in that area. The Newman government certainly recognises the value of arts in rebuilding lives and strengthening our communities and our social infrastructure after natural disasters such as the floods of earlier this year. We need to rebuild bridges, we need to rebuild roads, but we need to rebuild people's spirits as well, and the arts is a magnificent way of doing that. What is more, with the Newman government's emphasis on resilience, that sort of recovery builds a resilient spirit, I know.

In 2012-13, \$600,000 was allocated for the Creative Recovery—Building Resilience initiative, which was a program of arts-led community activities for our flood affected regions. Projects are happening throughout Queensland in areas which include Bundaberg, Gladstone, Gympie, the Fraser Coast, the Lockyer Valley, Logan, Rockhampton and Dalby.

Funding has been allocated to a series of projects according to local communities' needs and capacity, and that includes performing arts tours, film and circus workshops for young people and various live performances and community concerts. Interestingly enough, it is not only about touring from the big smoke out to those areas; it is about bringing kids from those areas to here. So I was pleased to welcome some of the Bundaberg kids to GoMA. What an experience for them! They got up early and came down on the bus. They had a great day at GoMA and went back.

Some of the money is going to Creative Regions in Bundaberg, which is a particularly impressive organisation that I have come across in my new role. They are not only taking arts from the big smoke to the regions but also encouraging what is already there in the community. The majority of the funding is allocated to two of those significant longer term programs: \$200,000 to Creative Regions in Bundaberg and \$240,000 to the national Creative Recovery Network, which is coordinated by the Brisbane based organisation Contact Inc.

These two groups are currently working on the ground with flood affected communities to design and deliver arts projects that are timely, relevant and responsive to local needs. Activities that are already supported through this program include Creative Recovery funding, which supported the 35 arts students from Bundaberg North State High School to come to GoMA, as I mentioned, to see the 7th APT exhibition. Through this experience the students identified new art processes that they otherwise would not have had a chance to do.

Another group, Pilot Light Productions, which is based in Childers, were able to deliver a benefit concert *Singing in the Rain* in the flood affected towns of Gayndah, Gin Gin, Maryborough and Bundaberg—a risky title in the circumstances, but off they went and did it. It was an activity which built stronger relationships between the company and local councils. The young cast members had the chance to bring their talents to the stage, many of them for the first time, for a great cause.

Other activities that are being rolled out include the extension of the highly successful Afloat recovery project, which saw accomplished artist Sue Berry work with community groups in the Bundaberg region to create a series of public artworks. Sue worked with locals of all ages to use a combination of specially selected objects, either brought along by participants or found in the aftermath, to create a series of large-scale 'footprint' artworks that connected the affected communities and enabled people to reflect on their experiences through art and community building.

As well as delivering hands-on arts activities specifically engaging young children and their families, Brisbane based Contact Inc. is developing its ongoing recovery partnership with Red Cross Australia. This unprecedented collaboration sees arts and cultural activities used to enhance and improve the effectiveness of community recovery training for volunteer, humanitarian and other workers sent to ravaged communities to assist in the broader response and recovery process.

The Playing Queensland Boost to Touring Fund has also been playing its part by waiving the presenter fees for communities affected by the floods. That meant they could present their performances for volunteers and emergency services personnel or use performances, if they wanted to, as fundraisers, which was another option. It is important to assist our communities as they recover through activities to help support strong, resilient communities. These are communities of which Queensland can be very proud.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That brings to a close the government questions. I call on the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I refer you to page 11 of the SDS, particularly the second-last dot point, which talks about 'undertaking internal process improvements within the department around streamlining and/or standardising current processes, forms and reporting with a view to reducing red tape for the government, industry and the community'. I would like a bit more information in relation to this. Firstly, is this an entirely internal process in relation to red-tape reduction?

Mr WALKER: Arts Queensland has implemented a number of initiatives that are focusing on reducing administrative expenses, streamlining arts and cultural investment administration and consolidation of contracts. That is the broad outline. Again, I might ask Mr Hill to take up the point, because there certainly are externally focused elements of it as well.

Mr Hill: In relation to anything we are doing external, one example is trying to streamline the process for applicants. One initiative we brought in is that, instead of requiring hard-copy applications, applicants are able to submit applications via USB up to 70 megabytes.

Ms TRAD: Mr Hill, maybe you can assist. Is this whole project being done internally? None of the red-tape reduction—

Mr Hill: Through Arts Queensland?

Ms TRAD: Yes.

Mr Hill: That is an initiative we are leading—

Ms TRAD: Internally?

Mr Hill: That is right, but with an outward-facing focus.

Ms TRAD: So in terms of reviewing contracts, that is an entirely internal review process?

Mr Hill: That is right. That is where we would start, absolutely. But we would take advice from crown law around our contracts.

Ms TRAD: In terms of the red-tape reduction initiative, will it apply to the grants provided by the department such as the Super Star Fund, presumably?

Mr WALKER: Certainly part of the strategy is streamlining of the grants streams and also of the application forms and so on for those that are applying for the grants. If that is what you are heading towards, in that sense it is internal in that we are doing it but it is externally focused in order to help those who are applying, if that assists.

Ms TRAD: It does. I wanted to know who was carrying out the work. I appreciate that the work would be internally external.

Mr WALKER: I might just ask Mr Hill to confirm who is carrying out that work.

Mr Hill: That is within the department, so we have cut back on administration—absolutely—where we can. In relation to Super Star itself, we did send the guidelines out for consultation, so the sector was consulted about those guidelines. The guidelines we are now running with are essentially based on feedback.

Mr WALKER: Madam Chair, can I just interpose. In relation to some of the questions that I said I would take on notice I do have answers now. With your agreement I am happy to deal with those at an appropriate time.

CHAIR: Now if you wish, Minister.

Mr WALKER: The first was with respect to the bombing of the Great Barrier Reef. I can confirm that DSITIA was not consulted with regard to that issue. It is more likely that the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority would have been the relevant body to provide any advice as it is the management body for the Great Barrier Reef. I think that question was from the member for Mackay.

The member for Mackay also asked a question in relation to innovation and science development performance measures—the proportion of stakeholders who are satisfied with innovation and science development services, consultative and engagement processes. He asked how many events were measured. I can advise that the answer is as follows: for the program called Partners in Technology briefings, PIT, there were 10 events; for Talking Scientists workshops there were four events, two of them in Brisbane and two in regional areas; for the program called Life Scientists Engagement 2013 BIO International there was one event; and for innovation services through QMI Solutions there were five events.

Finally, the member for Mackay also asked a question about a briefing note to the former minister obtained through RTI. The member asked whether or not the statement ‘there is no funding currently allocated in the 2012-13 budget for new science investment’ was correct. The statement in the brief was correct. The 2012-13 budget papers show that there was no new money in 2012-13 for new science investment. I do not know if that deals with all of the questions on notice, but it certainly deals with those.

Ms TRAD: Minister, on page 14 of the SDS there is a new target. It is commercial revenue as a percentage of total revenue. I think the target is some 12 per cent. Can you enlighten the committee about this 12 per cent target and whether or not it compares with past private sponsorship of the cultural sector in Queensland?

Mr WALKER: I may have to take that on notice in relation to comparative figures. I will ask Mr Hill to respond and if any more detail is required we can take that on notice.

Mr Hill: Could I just clarify the question?

Ms TRAD: It relates to the 12 per cent commercialisation target. I understand that the private sector has supported the cultural sector in Queensland for quite some time. How does the 12 per cent compare to what has gone on previously?

Mr Hill: The 12 per cent is in relation to the controlled appropriation, so it does not actually relate to the administered funding, which is where the statutory authority’s budget resides. This is a new measure we have introduced essentially as an effectiveness measure. Arts Queensland operates various parts of the budget, including the car park. One example is that we are looking to maximise utilisation from our car park. That is one indicator where we would look to maximise the non-government revenue that our budget takes.

Ms TRAD: So how would you do that, Mr Hill? What is being proposed in relation to that?

Mr Hill: There is nothing specific at the moment. We have just started the financial year so we are working on strategies to do that, but there is not actually anything specific to allude to at the moment. That is what we are planning for. That is what the measure relates to.

Ms TRAD: Well, that sort of indicates to me that car-parking fees for the Performing Arts Complex and so on will go up.

Mr Hill: That is not correct.

Ms TRAD: I am just trying to get a sense of how the 12 per cent is—

Mr Hill: User charges are part of our budget in relation to the control. What we are looking at is the utilisation. In some periods of the year the car parks are less full than at other times, so we are looking at opportunities whereby we might be able to maximise that.

Ms TRAD: Would that be like outsourcing to a private company to run the car parking for that low-utilisation period?

Mr Hill: No, that is not on the table.

Mr WALKER: The honourable member might obtain some more assistance from the director-general, who thinks he can help.

Mr Garner: Certainly. I will support what Evan has just announced around the fact that there has certainly been no discussion around the Cultural Centre car parks around commercialisation. What we are looking at to increase utilisation is actually managing better those who are using the Cultural Centre precinct. What we are finding is that, because of their location and ideal nature, we are actually getting people parking there long term. As such, we are trying to identify mechanisms to open it up much more for those who are using the Cultural Centre for a couple of hours. Certainly there are no plans to increase fees and there are no plans to outsource.

Ms TRAD: But maybe increased turnover?

Mr Garner: Ideally, the more people going through the Cultural Centre the better, yes.

Ms TRAD: In terms of the Arts Investment Advisory Board, Minister, can you advise—I appreciate that this may have happened under the previous minister—how the members were appointed, whether or not they are remunerated and if so how much, and the total cost for the administration of the board?

Mr WALKER: Thank you for the question. The seven members of the board were appointed for a three-year term. The board has met five times since its inception. Its key areas of focus have been advising on the development and implementation of the new Arts and Cultural Investment Framework including funding categories, assessment processes, guidelines and application forms, and also the consideration and recommendations on the Super Star Fund applications.

As I said, there were seven members appointed. That was back in February. An eighth board member—Christine Pulvirenti, as the regional Queensland rep—was appointed on 12 June. The board members are Mr Mark Fenton, Mr Philip Bacon am, Mr Scott Hutchinson, Mr Robin Levison, Mr David Thomas, Professor Sue Street, Dr Jane Wilson and Ms Pulvirenti. They certainly have between them vast experience in the areas on which they are required to give me advice.

The total cost for the board for 2012-13 is \$6,993. That includes sitting fees and miscellaneous expenses. Estimated costs for the board for 2013-14 are \$40,000, which will take into account a full year of board meetings and some variable costs such as travel and special assignment fees, which are difficult to predict.

You asked a little more about the appointment process and you rightly pointed out that that was a matter for the former minister, but the appointment of those members is a cabinet process.

Ms TRAD: Minister, in relation to the domestic and overseas travel document you tabled earlier—thank you for that—I would appreciate knowing how much accommodation was as a proportion of the total amount expended. Where it says 'budget estimated actual', that is the actual amount that was spent from the budgeted allocation, I assume?

Mr WALKER: I will just have to check that, because I do not have the document in my hand. If you would not mind asking that again, please, Ms Trad, for Mr Hill's benefit.

Ms TRAD: The 2012-13 estimated actual was the amount that was expended on the trips?

Mr Hill: That is correct.

Mr WALKER: And did you want further information on the accommodation?

Ms TRAD: Yes, as a proportion.

Mr WALKER: I will take that on notice, if I may.

Ms TRAD: I want to go back to red-tape reduction. Is there a particular criteria that the department is using in terms of reducing duplication, reducing red tape, simplifying forms and procedures? What is the criteria being used?

Mr WALKER: I will have to ask Mr Hill to advise on that.

Mr Hill: Thanks, Minister. In relation to streamlining, that is feedback we have taken from the sector. We have had a range of discussions around that. Arts Queensland was restructured in September. This reduced the actual size of the organisation and it was built around reducing administration overhead. That essentially has driven our organisational structure now by art form. Whereas we had four art form areas before, it is now essentially an art form development area, policy and program, and communities. So we have simplified the approach in that regard. Our restructure provided a lot of cues around ways to rethink and redo what we carry out. There are discussions we have with the sector around that as well.

Mr WALKER: I do have an answer to one of the questions raised by the honourable member for South Brisbane. That was in relation to the workshops for the rural arts strategy. The advice I have is that 192 people have participated in eight workshops, including four regional workshops. Those regional workshops were in Cairns, Townsville, Gold Coast and one other location yet to be advised, and 68 people have responded to the survey. Additional workshops are planned for Gladstone, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Longreach and Maroochydore, and two workshops are to be held at Articulate. There will be a tertiary and higher education workshop at The Edge over at the library attended by UQ, QUT, Griffith, Bond and Southbank Institute of Technology representatives.

CHAIR: It is 7.30 pm. The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts has now expired. On behalf of the committee, I sincerely thank you, the director-general, chief executive officers and departmental officers for your attendance and for your enormous work towards informing our examination of the proposed appropriation.

That completes the committee's hearings into the matters referred to it by the parliament. Before I conclude, also on behalf of the committee I thank Hansard staff, the attendants and our research committee for their assistance.

Mr WALKER: May I just respond with a word of thanks to the committee for its time and courtesy, to the Hansard staff and those who helped in arranging the event, and of course to my own director-general, his team and my own staff for what is a tremendous amount of work in getting this together. For a new minister like myself it actually includes practising for these, so that was a frightening—but educational—experience. So thank you for your time.

CHAIR: We appreciate it, thank you. I now declare the 2013 estimates hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee closed.

Committee adjourned at 7.31 pm