

THURSDAY, 20 AUGUST 2015

ESTIMATES—LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE— JUSTICE, ATTORNEY-GENERAL, TRAINING AND SKILLS

Estimate Committee Members

Mr ML Furner (Chair)
Mrs T Smith
Mr JM Krause
Mr JE Madden
Mr AJ Perrett
Mr MT Ryan

Members in Attendance

Mr IB Walker
Mr TL Mander
Mr JP Bleijie
Mr R Katter

In Attendance

Hon. YM D'Ath, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills

Mr J Sullivan, Chief of Staff

Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Mr D Mackie, Director-General

Mr G Davis, Executive Director, Financial Services, Corporate Services

Mr S Harvey, Assistant Director-General, Youth Justice Services

Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland

Mr K Cocks AM, Anti-Discrimination Commissioner

Office of the Public Trustee

Mr M Crofton, Acting Public Trustee, Chief Executive Officer

Crime and Corruption Commission

Ms A Gummow, Acting Chairperson

Ms Kathleen Florian, Acting Chief Executive Officer

Electoral Commission of Queensland

Mr W van der Merwe, Electoral Commissioner

Department of Education and Training

Dr J Watterston, Director-General

Ms S Wauchope, Deputy Director-General, Training and Skills

TAFE Queensland

Ms Jodi Schmidt, Chief Executive Officer

Committee met at 9.01 am

CHAIR: Good morning. I declare the estimates hearing of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee now open. We will be examining the appropriation bills of 2015 in relation to the portfolio areas administered by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills and later this afternoon the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services.

I am Mark Furner, the member for Ferny Grove and chair of the committee. With me is the deputy chair, Mrs Tarnya Smith, the member for Mount Ommaney. Other committee members in attendance here today are Mr Jon Krause, member for Beaudesert; Mr Jim Madden, member for Ipswich West; Mr Tony Perrett, member for Gympie; and Mr Mark Ryan, member for Morayfield. Also present is the shadow minister, Mr Ian Walker, the member for Mansfield. The committee has granted leave for a number of non-committee members to participate today and ask questions throughout the hearing. At this stage they are Mr Lawrence Springborg, the Leader of the Opposition; Mr John-Paul Langbroek, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Ian Walker, whom I have already mentioned; Mr Jarrod Bleijie, the member for Kawana; Mr Geoff Seeney, the member for Callide; and Mr Tim Mander, the member for Everton.

The hearing program for today has been published and is available from secretariat staff. It details the order in which we examine expenditure for the various organisational units within these portfolios. The proceedings today will end at 6.30 pm. I remind all of those participating in the hearing today that these proceedings are similar to parliament in that the public cannot participate in the proceedings. In this regard, I remind all present that under the standing orders any person may be excluded from the hearing at the discretion of the chair or by order of the committee.

The committee has authorised this hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the conditions of broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat staff. I ask that all mobile phones are either switched off or turned to silent, otherwise an appropriate penalty will be applied. I remind members that, in addition to the minister, the standing orders provide that the directors-general and those chief executive officers set out in schedule 7 of the standing orders may be directly questioned by the committee.

I now declare the proposed expenditure of the relevant organisational units within the portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills, and the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Attorney-General, the director-general of the department, statutory authority officials and the public to this hearing. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask that departmental and statutory authority officers identify themselves when they speak and that all speakers speak directly into the microphone. We will commence the proceedings and focus on the proposed expenditure for the statutory bodies within the portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice until we break at 10.30 am. I welcome the Attorney-General. Would you like to provide an opening statement for the committee?

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Chair. It is an honour to appear before the committee today to answer questions as the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice in the Palaszczuk government. I am proud to have this opportunity to detail both the achievements in our first six months and the groundwork we have done on further reforms. Those achievements started with the first bill the Palaszczuk government introduced into the 55th Parliament. It restored the right for all Queenslanders to have their say on election day despite the efforts of the LNP to silence the most vulnerable, and it lifted the veil of secrecy thrown over political donations by the LNP.

Another priority for this government is to honour our election commitment on tackling alcohol fuelled violence. Research by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education shows that 82 per cent of Queenslanders agree with us that it is finally time for action on trading hours. We will back up that action with \$9.6 million over three years for expanded compliance and enforcement by Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation inspectors in and around licensed premises.

For far too many people across this state, one of the greatest threats to their safety is ever present because tragically it is in their own homes. Victims who have the courage to break the cycle of domestic violence in their household deserve our utmost respect and support. As the Premier announced this week, this government will provide the leadership and the resources to implement all 140

recommendations in Dame Quentin Bryce's landmark *Not now, not ever* report into domestic and family violence. The response is already underway. Next month a trial of a specialised domestic and family violence court with dedicated magistrate Colin Strofield will begin at Southport, funded by a \$1.1 million allocation in this year's budget. Legal Aid Queensland will use a further \$1.1 million to expand the domestic violence duty lawyer service to 14 locations throughout the state.

Another area in which we have already taken decisive action is our comprehensive systemic assault on organised crime. We have allocated \$6 million to conduct the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry to give law enforcement a clear picture of the battle ahead. The commission has the power to compel witnesses to testify about what they know and who is involved. At the same time we will be reviewing the VLAD legislation to ensure that we get it right.

An area of my portfolio that I am particularly passionate about is youth justice. We are proud that in our first budget \$23.6 million has been allocated to bring back the court based referrals to youth justice conferencing. The conferencing process makes young people take responsibility for their actions and the effect on victims as, importantly, it gives victims the opportunity to be heard. This was a positive program that was working well before it was cut by an Attorney-General more concerned with headlines and helicopters than listening to the experts.

I think it is particularly appropriate given that I am before the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee today to discuss another contentious issue in the previous government's approach to youth justice. In November 2012 the former Attorney-General announced a \$2 million trial of boot camps and said loud and long that they were the secret to curb reoffending. The subsequent processes he followed, or more precisely the lack of them, have already been the subject of a scathing appraisal by the Queensland Audit Office in April of this year. That report found the cost had blown out to \$12.3 million and that contracts had been awarded under what can only be called questionable circumstances. Expert evidence was ignored and contracts were awarded to organisations that did not even make the short list.

Further evaluation by independent experts KPMG is even more damning. It has found that the cost over three years has actually blown out to \$16.7 million. More importantly, the evaluation audit has shattered the myth on which the trial was based. It has found that youth boot camps do not break the cycle of repeat offending and that recidivism rates of participants in the sentencing boot camp were no different from those experienced for offenders in areas such as youth detention centres. It found the program was hastily set up and the program was not supported by appropriate research. In short, it was an expensive failure cooked up by an Attorney-General who measured success by the amount of media interest he generated.

Today I can announce that I have directed my department to terminate the trial of boot camps. Contracts that expire in September and October of this year will not be renewed. My department is making arrangements to ensure a smooth transition of the young people in the only camp operating at this time to appropriate alternatives. The Palaszczuk government committed to publicly releasing the findings of an independent review of these boot camps. For the benefit of the committee today, I table the final report of the KPMG review.

CHAIR: Leave is granted.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Chair, this is a scathing report and it shows that more work needs to be done to support youth and to stop recidivism in this state. We are committed to doing that but doing it based on evidence and based on models that we know will work. I am looking forward to answering questions in relation to my portfolio from the committee and talking about the good work that the Palaszczuk government is doing.

CHAIR: Thank you, Attorney. For the benefit of everyone in the room, the committee has agreed to a process of 15-minute blocks this morning for questions. Firstly, we will go to non-government members. I call Mr Walker.

Mr WALKER: Thank you, Chair. Attorney, I would like to direct my first question, given that it is for the sector parts of your portfolio, to the CCC representative. Ms Gummow, I am looking particularly at page 55 of the SDS relating to staffing for the CCC and the grant funding reference on page 61. I am looking there particularly at note 6. In broader terms, Ms Gummow, the budget measures papers from 2014-15 showed funding to the CCC of \$1.174 million for 2015-16 and \$639,000 for 2016-17 as additional funding to assist the CCC with increased activity resulting from amendments to the act and from the former government's tough stance on criminal motorcycle gangs. My question is: can you confirm whether there has been any additional financial support for the CCC in terms of tackling organised crime activities in Queensland for 2014-15 and 2016-17?

Ms Gummow: It is my understanding that most of the temporary funding which was granted by your government finished in December. There is an additional amount that covers some proceeds of crime which was three-year temporary funding as opposed to one-year temporary funding. Since that funding ceased in December, there has been no cut to the CCC's budget. Instead, there has been a small increase, but our focus on organised crime is still current and always will be.

Mr WALKER: Can I take you to page 56, which refers to the staffing levels. That shows staffing levels in the 2014-15 budget of 341—this is for crime fighting and anti-corruption—in 2014-15 the actual is 348 and in 2015-16 it is back to 341. Is what you are saying that the extra staff provided to take it from the 341 budgeted figure to the 348 actual has not been continued?

Ms Gummow: What I understand is there has also been a bit of a shift in the way the organisation is structured in the sense that some of the lawyers have been pulled out. The funding ceased in December so those positions which were largely temporary have not been continued, but it has been absorbed in the work of that section of the organisation. Is that correct?

Ms Florian: I can indicate that the difference in those seven FTE is as a result of the expiration of temporary OMCG funding.

Mr WALKER: And therefore those seven roles do not continue?

Ms Florian: That is correct. Those seven roles or the additional funding was intended for a set period of time, which expired in December of last year, with the exception of proceeds of crime funding which continues for a further year.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. Ms Gummow, I refer you to page 53 of the SDS which relates to restraint of assets and forfeitures to the state and the targets set out there. I am interested to know how the targets are determined and what the confiscation costs are as a percentage of forfeiture and how that is determined.

Ms Gummow: I think my colleague would be better placed to answer that.

Mr WALKER: Thank you.

Ms Florian: There were two limbs to that question. So the first limb, as I understand it, was how the targets are determined for proceeds of crime.

Mr WALKER: That is correct.

Ms Florian: Firstly, a number of variables feed into that. The first is the performance in the previous year. Other variables that are included, however, are changes in the jurisdiction, which have been a feature of recent proceeds of crime landscape, but also implications such as the training of new staff which may have a slight downturn effect over a short period of time. So those are the sorts of variables that are taken into account in setting what the proceeds of crime target is.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. Can I keep your attention on page 56 of the SDS and the breakdown there of staffing levels. I am interested in a breakdown of how many staff are allocated to the specific areas for 2015-16, including crime fighting and prevention, public sector integrity and witness protection services.

Ms Florian: In relation to that specific information about the breakdown of staff allocated to each of those areas, could I take that question on notice and respond as promptly as we can with the information you desire?

Mr WALKER: Of course. Thank you. The CCC also deals with issues that may be referred to it with respect to the conduct of public officials. It is in that respect that I would like to question the Attorney as first law officer, and taking into account the responsibility that is referred to on page 4 of the SDS in relation to accountability, transparency, openness and effectiveness. I am interested in any consideration the Attorney may have given in relation to the member for Bundamba in respect of the performance of her office.

CHAIR: Mr Walker, that question is out of order. We are here to discuss matters in relation to the Appropriation Bill. I will be pulling you up throughout the day if we deviate from the matter that we are here to discuss in respect to this review of estimates on the Appropriation Bill. Do you have any further questions?

Mr WALKER: No, Mr Chairman, I want you to—

CHAIR: Okay, I will go to government members if you have no questions.

Mr WALKER: Mr Chairman, I am asking you to reconsider that please.

CHAIR: No, I have ruled on that and I am ruling you out of order on that question. That is totally irrelevant to today's matters dealing with the Appropriation Bill.

Mr WALKER: It is not irrelevant, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: No, I am afraid it is.

Mr WALKER: The Attorney-General is the first law officer of this state. She has particular roles to fulfil. My question is not in relation to the Minister for Police and the matters that have been referred to the committee. It arises out of a reference in the SDS to the accountability that this department, above all departments, must have. Are you trying to close us down completely, or can we question the Attorney-General on her appropriate role in relation to these matters?

CHAIR: The matter in relation to your question dealing with a member of this parliament has got nothing to do with the Attorney-General, and I bring you back to the Appropriation Bill.

Mrs D'ATH: Chair, I am happy to go to the issue in part.

CHAIR: If you can, in part.

Mrs D'ATH: Simply on the basis that, in relation to any public official and my role as the Attorney-General and the role of the CCC, if anybody—the public, a member of parliament or a public official—has allegations to make, they should do so through the proper channels and refer those matters with any information they have that would warrant an investigation. No such complaint has been made to me at this point.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr WALKER: But, Attorney, your role of course does not rely simply on people making complaints. You have a role as first law officer, and your diary shows that at around the time the police minister called a witness with respect to the matter relating to the member for Pumicestone you had a meeting with the director-general, the Solicitor-General and the Crown Solicitor on 4 June. My question to you is whether you considered at that meeting the issues that had been raised at that time in relation to the Police Commissioner and whether you acted as a result of those considerations.

Mrs D'ATH: I have no intentions of breaching confidentiality in relation to meetings I have, but I can assure you that meeting wasn't in relation to that matter.

Mr WALKER: I am sorry—was or was not?

Mrs D'ATH: Was not.

Mr WALKER: Can you tell the committee when you first became aware that the member for Bundamba had compromised an operational police investigation with respect to the member for Pumicestone?

Mrs D'ATH: If there is any evidence—and I understand this matter has already been considered and I will turn to the CCC and they might be able to clarify that—that anyone has, they can put a formal allegation to the CCC and make those complaints and it can be investigated, as is the proper course. I understand that there is a matter referred to the Ethics Committee through the Speaker. That is where it should be dealt with and that is what I refer the member to.

Mr WALKER: I would refer then to Ms Gummow and ask whether any such reference is under consideration by the CCC.

Ms Gummow: I am not aware of any complaints having been made at all.

Mr WALKER: And no reference from the Premier?

Ms Gummow: Not that I am aware of.

Mr WALKER: Can I ask you, Attorney, as the state's foremost law officer, do you have confidence in your cabinet colleague, the Minister for Police?

Mr RYAN: Point of order, Mr Chair. That is asking for an opinion and it is contrary to standing order 115. I ask you to rule that out of order.

CHAIR: And I do. I rule that question out of order.

Mr WALKER: I might rephrase it then, Mr Chair, if that is getting a bit touchy. I ask the Attorney whether she believes the member has broken any law in her time as Minister for Police.

Mr RYAN: Point of order again, Mr Chair. That again is contrary to standing order 115, in that it asks for an opinion and even goes further to ask for a legal opinion. I ask you to rule it out of order.

CHAIR: I do.

Mr WALKER: Then can I ask as a final part in this line of questioning, Mr Chair, whether the Attorney can advise when she first became aware of when the Minister for Police had potentially misled the PCCC?

Mrs D'ATH: That is an issue that has been referred to the Ethics Committee through the Speaker. That is the appropriate course that that matter be dealt with and I do not intend to make any additional comment. The fact of it is there are proper processes in this parliament and those processes should be allowed to be conducted—just as you did when you were in government in relation to the former minister for disabilities when that minister was referred to the Ethics Committee for allegedly misleading the parliament. There is a process that should be undertaken, and the minister should be given the opportunity to continue on with her work while that matter is considered. Thank you.

Mr WALKER: My question was not as to the process or making any reflection on the guilt or otherwise of the police minister in respect of that matter. My question was when the Attorney-General knew of the situation, and that does go to the issues of accountability and transparency referred to in the SDS.

CHAIR: Mr Walker, the Attorney answered the question appropriately that this matter is being dealt with in the PCCC and the Ethics Committee—

Mr WALKER: I understand that, Mr Chairman—

CHAIR: Excuse me, I am talking. This matter is being dealt with by the Ethics Committee and therefore is not a subject that can be questioned in respect of the proceedings here today. I invite you to move on to your next question.

Mr WALKER: Mr Chairman, I ask you to reconsider that ruling. It is not correct that simply because the matter has been referred that we cannot discuss the matter, and we need to get this straight for the rest—

CHAIR: Sorry. I bring you back to the standing orders—in particular, standing orders 115 and also 271 in respect of this matter. They clearly identify that this matter is not a subject of discussion before the estimates hearing here today. So I move you on to your next question and we are getting close to exhausting your time.

Mr WALKER: Well, Mr Chairman, in that case I will direct my next question to the Electoral Commissioner if he is available please.

CHAIR: This will be your last question.

Mr WALKER: I refer to page 91 of the SDS in relation to 'working with political parties and candidates to ensure compliance with financial disclosure requirements'. Firstly, can you elaborate on how the commission does this—in particular, the issue of the method by which and the staffing support you have for publication of disclosure documents publicly on the commission's website?

Mr van der Merwe: Certainly. Working with candidates and political parties is an important part of our educative process or program within the Electoral Commission. In the lead-up to an electoral event, as we had earlier this year, political parties are invited in and they are given fairly significant detailed briefings, as are the candidates in terms of anything relating to the electoral event, in particular funding and disclosure matters as they stand. We have a couple of commission staff who are readily available at all times to take questions. When parties or candidates are required to lodge returns and things like that, our staff actually contact them in terms of what needs to be lodged, we provide them with advice and we walk them through the process. Our doors are always open to providing information that may be appropriate.

Mr WALKER: Mr van der Merwe, you would agree that the placing of this information on the website and its accuracy is an important part of the process?

Mr van der Merwe: It is.

CHAIR: Thank you for that answer. We are now moving to government members and I call the member for Ipswich West.

Mr MADDEN: I have a question for the Anti-Discrimination Commission. I am interested in the good work that the Anti-Discrimination Commission does that may not necessarily be on the front page of the media but is still important work. Can the commission please explain the work it has recently done promoting human rights in Queensland?

Mr Cocks: We carry out our functions at three major areas. One is receiving complaints and assessing those complaints and then attempting to conciliate those complaints, which we have a fairly successful record at and a high satisfaction rate from both respondents and complainants. Our other area is in education, and we carry out education to community organisations for free and to the private sector and government agencies as well. That has been very successful.

Our other area that we have embarked upon is in promoting human rights through strategic community engagement processes. We have carried that out in partnership with a number of other government agencies, including police and multicultural affairs. In that space is the matter relating to when the heightened terrorism alert was raised and what happened with a number of the Muslim communities—but it was not only Muslim communities; it was any community identified with religious attire or of a Middle Eastern appearance. We were aware of a number of cowardly attacks upon particularly women and children. With the police and multicultural affairs, we have built a strong, trusting relationship with that community and those communities by producing video and letters of support for those community members and bystander videos to assist people in understanding how they also can assist in de-escalating situations where community members may be assaulted.

There has been a number of what we call World Cafes held down the Gold Coast and in Cairns with multifaith groups, bringing the multifaith groups together to work with people from a Muslim faith. Also in building inclusive communities in Rockhampton, our office worked with the Livingstone shire on what is called the Beach Day Out. Last year over 1,500 people participated. It highlighted accessibility and how to include people with disabilities into the community. That was such a success that now Livingstone Shire Council has taken the leadership role in that and is coordinating that event this year. It is on their agenda to broaden that to address issues not only of inclusivity but also diversity. The distinction between those two things is that diversity is about counting people and inclusiveness is about making people count.

They are just some examples of the promotion of human rights. One other major piece of work that we have been carrying out for at least 2½ years has been in the Lockyer Valley. We were asked to do some training and became aware of some issues of racism, particularly with new migrants from the African communities. We then became aware of a number of issues raised around 417 visa holders, particularly in that vulnerable period when, if they want to extend their visa for a further 12 months, they are required to do three months work in rural areas. They have been exploited. There have been reports of serious sexual offences and exploitation in wages and also in accommodation—overcrowding. We are holding a workshop next Thursday in partnership with QFES. Over 80 people are coming to that. Key stakeholders include most councils in the harvest trail, Fair Work Ombudsman representatives, QFES and other local authorities. We will be looking at the issues of accommodation and what may need to be looked at, whether there needs to be legislative reform or other agencies being more diligent in monitoring what is happening because none of us want another Childers event.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Cocks.

Mr MADDEN: Mr Cocks, can I thank you for your answer. I share your concerns about the problems with regard to 417 visa holders in the Lockyer Valley and I would be very interested in attending that workshop you mentioned.

Mr Cocks: That would be excellent. Thank you very much.

CHAIR: I will now go to the member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: My question is to the Attorney and relates to electoral reform. Can the Attorney please outline what steps the government has taken to increase accountability and openness, especially through electoral reform? There is a second limb to that question. I understand also that the latest political donation disclosures have been published. Attorney, are you concerned that there appears to be large donations over the \$1,000 threshold that remain secret?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. As you rightly pointed out, it certainly was an election commitment of the Palaszczuk government to ensure more transparency and accountability around public disclosure of political donations. That is not just what the people of Queensland want but expect from their members of parliament, political parties and candidates—to disclose where they are getting their donations and from whom. That is a reasonable expectation of the public. The previous government changed the thresholds in this area. They were \$1,000. The previous government increased them to \$12,400, but they were indexed. So they went up to \$12,800 during that term of government. We made a commitment that we would bring it back down to \$1,000. We made it clear to

all parties that if we were to be returned to government, we would make those changes and we would make those changes retrospective. So everyone was on notice that we as a party, as the Labor Party, would continue to disclose all donations of \$1,000 or more but that other parties and individuals should be on notice that if we returned to government, we would be expecting those disclosures to be made in relation to any donations over that \$1,000.

As you are aware, it was one of the first pieces of legislation that we introduced and passed in this parliament and one I believe we can be proud of as a government in terms of bringing back that transparency. Considering what we have seen in other states and the direction of the Commonwealth in this space, I think it is important that we are as accountable as possible.

The member talked about the most recent disclosures, which is the first tranche of disclosures under the legislation that we introduced as a government earlier this year. I am aware that, unfortunately, the LNP's disclosures have shown that there are 28 donations that are \$1,000 or more where it has not identified who the donor is. One of those donations is of \$10,000. I find it interesting because the LNP's own fundraising guidelines, their fundraising code, specifically talk about ensuring accountability and transparency in all financial matters related to the party and ensuring proper procedures and records. It actually talks about ensuring that any funds received must be properly receipted with the following information shown on the receipt: the name of the party unit receiving the funds, the full name of the person providing the funds, the address of that person and the amount received. The fact that they have 28 donations for which they have not complied with their own guidelines, their own fundraising code, is quite concerning.

Can I also say that, even without that code, I do not think I know any political party or candidate who would not want to track who is giving them money, especially when there are \$5,000 and \$10,000 donations. At the very least you want to be able to thank them for their very kind donation. I consider \$5,000, \$6,000, \$7,000 and \$10,000 as a significant donation, not a minor one as some members of the opposition have called it in the past. I consider it quite a significant donation. It is not just that most political parties and candidates would want to say thank you, but of course political parties need donations to be able to run campaigns. You want to keep those details so you can write to them and encourage them to support you in the future and ask for further donations.

CHAIR: Minister, I might just pull you up there. I know you are extending a bit of a long bow in respect of linking the new laws to disclosure, but I do not think the LNP's disclosure policies are relevant to the SDS here today. I would like to know whether the laws provide any redress in respect of the 28 donations in excess of the \$1,000 limit. Is there any recourse in identifying who those persons may be subject to the new laws of disclosure?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the chair for that question. That might be a question that the Electoral Commissioner might want to answer directly to ensure the accuracy of that information about disclosures.

CHAIR: We could ask the Electoral Commissioner to come forward then, thanks.

Mr van der Merwe: The commission is aware of those donations which have not been identified. We are currently talking to the LNP to try to ascertain whether or not that information is available. We have been told it is not. If it is not, we will seek Crown Law advice in terms of what action we need to take in terms of non-compliance with the legislation. But, yes, we are aware of it and we are working on it as we speak.

CHAIR: Given the evidence that has just been provided by the Attorney that it appears the LNP provides some sort of process where donors are identified by name, what recourse have you in terms of obtaining those receipts or otherwise of identifying those 28 donors of donations in excess of \$1,000?

Mr van der Merwe: We have requested that information. From what my colleagues back at the commission have said, the LNP said that information is not available, but we will pursue it. My role in the community is to administer the electoral laws and I will do whatever I have to do to make sure the legislation is complied with. I will refer the matter to Crown Law to get some expert legal advice in terms of what my next steps would be if I do not get that information because I am required to publish it.

CHAIR: How many meetings or dialogues have you had with the LNP at this stage regarding this matter?

Mr van der Merwe: Can I take that one on notice? My staff have been talking with the LNP.

CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. We will go back to the member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: It is just a follow-up question, Attorney, in respect of the electoral reforms and the donation thresholds. Is it contrary to law that those donations remain secret?

Mrs D'ATH: Certainly the Electoral Act makes it specific that donations must be recorded and donations of \$1,000 or more must be disclosed including who is providing that donation.

CHAIR: That probably brings our 15 minutes to a close. I return to non-government members. I assume, Mr Walker, you are seeking the call.

Mr WALKER: Thank you, Mr Chair. Perhaps if Mr van der Merwe could return; we were halfway there. I think, Mr van der Merwe, we got to the point of talking about the necessity for the publication on your website of the information that came through and how important that was in the integrity of the process for this information to be on the site and checked and correct. I am interested in what role you then play. Other than displaying the information, do you, for example, crosscheck party declarations as against third-party declarations, or is your role limited to displaying the returns and then allowing people to complain or raise issues?

Mr van der Merwe: We will publish the returns as we receive them. However, if anyone, be it another political party or member of the public, disagrees with that, I have an obligation to investigate it further. The information that appears on my website needs to be correct and accurate. If anybody thinks it is not, I will do whatever I need to do to make sure it is accurate.

Mr WALKER: Mr Chair, I might table, if I can, a letter that I have received and an extract with respect to one of the gift disclosures.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr WALKER: I have a copy for Mr van der Merwe and the other members of the committee.

Mrs D'ATH: Chair, could I be provided with a copy of that as well?

Mr WALKER: I am sorry, Attorney. Perhaps you can have this one.

CHAIR: Can you explain this for me till I get a copy? I have a brief—

Mr WALKER: Perhaps, Mr Chair, if I could take you through it page by page, it might help.

CHAIR: Of course.

Mr WALKER: There is a covering letter from the people who drew this to my attention. Attached to the document is the material from the website, which is the return of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union, Queensland branch. The first page is pretty unexceptional. The second page is pretty unexceptional. The third page is pretty unexceptional. The fourth page is pretty unexceptional. Then the fifth page of what was on the site appears to be a letter to Wayne and Marie thanking them for being returning officers and inviting them to a dinner and trivia night. I am interested as to how that may appear in the return, Mr van der Merwe?

Mr van der Merwe: With our returning officers, we bring them down to Brisbane and we train them for a week. Part of the process at the end of the week, generally on the Thursday, is to organise a dinner and a trivia night to thank them. They fund it themselves; I do not pay for it.

Mr WALKER: I quite accept that. My question is what is it doing on the disclosure part of the website with respect to that return?

Mr van der Merwe: I might have to look into that one. I will take it on notice, Mr Walker.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. I have a similar document which I seek leave to table, if I may.

CHAIR: Leave is granted.

Mr WALKER: Mr Chair, this is a document which I obtained from the website this morning, and this is the disclosure return of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. Once again the early part of it is unremarkable, but the disclosure return at the back of it has attached—and this is on the public website—a letter from 1 July 2011 to a certain person notifying them of their appointment to the audit and risk management committee of the commission.

Again, Mr van der Merwe, this is an unusual thing, I would think, to have in this public disclosure which is, as we have agreed, an important part of the process as is integrity.

Mr van der Merwe: I agree with you. It certainly is an error, and I thank you for bringing it to my attention. It should not have been up there.

Mr WALKER: Mr van der Merwe, do those two incidents—and there may be more—indicate to you that there is any issue with respect to the staffing, the resourcing or the confidence the public might have in the way that the commission is undertaking this very important part of its function?

Mr van der Merwe: I do not believe it is. These are two documents that have appeared on the disclosure part of the website which should not have been there. If they had been brought to our attention prior, they would certainly have been removed. On behalf of the commission, I thank you for bringing them to my attention. I do not think it is an issue with the staffing and that of the commission. I just believe it is human error.

Mr WALKER: Thank you, Mr van der Merwe, those are all the questions that I have.

I might direct my next question back to the CCC, if I may. Ms Gummow, I am looking at note 11 on page 61 of the SDS, which reads—

The increase in grants and other contributions is primarily due to funding for EB increases and the cyclical (4-5 yearly) SOE replacement program.

It then says—

These amounts have been offset by a decrease in grant funding for OMCGs in the 2015-16 financial year.

My question is: what is the nature and extent of the decrease in grant funding, and what is its impact on the CCC's ability to pursue major organised crime groups?

Ms Gummow: It is my understanding that it is all about what I answered last time, in the sense that the temporary funding finished at the end of December so the fallout of that is that sort of thing. It bears no impact on our ability to continue to deal with organised crime.

Ms Florian: I think we can add that there has in fact been an increase in grant funding of \$650,000, or 1.2 per cent, from the previous year. That increase in grant funding is made up of a number of aspects, including \$746,000 for enterprise bargaining, temporary funding of \$1.5 million to fund the cyclical IT standard operating environment replacement program and a Commonwealth grant of \$7,000 for the Indigenous cadet program; however, this increase in grant funding is offset by the expiration of the temporary funding that has previously been alluded to.

Mr WALKER: Are you saying to me that the words 'decrease in grant funding' are meant to refer to noncontinuation of temporary funding?

Ms Florian: Yes. It is a feature of how the OMCG funding has reflected in our papers previously that it has been reflected in the base or grant funding rather than as a separate line item.

Mr WALKER: I will ask Ms Gummow first and then if necessary pass on to Ms Florian. Based on the intelligence that the commission has, do you believe that the threat of organised crime has escalated in the past six months or otherwise? How do you read that?

Ms Gummow: From the briefings that I have received in my short time here I do not think there has been a significant increase, particularly in relation to outlaw motorcycle gangs. I think the whole focus on organised crime has continued, and we are engaging proactively with both the Commission of Inquiry run by Michael Byrne QC and also the taskforce into the suite of VLAD laws that is chaired by Justice Alan Wilson QC.

CHAIR: Attorney, were you seeking to add something?

Mrs D'ATH: If I could just assist the member in his question, because the member seems to be concerned that there might be some cuts in relation to organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs.

The acting chair and acting CEO have already taken the member to the funding that was only temporary but is identified as a decrease this year because it appeared in the 2014-15 budget in relation to grants and does not appear in 2015-16 because it was temporary and ceased in December. I can advise that the funding of an additional \$1.174 million for 2015-16 and \$639,000 for 2016-17 that appeared in the 2014-15 budget papers on page 26, being the \$4.865 million additional temporary funding, continues. Both the \$1.174 million and the \$639,000 are in the 2016-17 budget, so the exact amount of funding that was allocated in the 2014-15 budget in the forward estimates for outlaw motorcycle gangs continues on. It can be found on page 58 of the current 2015-16 service delivery statements in relation to the total funding of \$53.584 million in grants and other contributions for the CCC. This is also where the money sat and could be identified in the SDS in the 2014-15 budget.

Just to reconfirm, there have been no cuts whatsoever. The money that was set aside and identified in last year's budget papers appears also in this budget and the forward estimates, and the only money that has ceased is the money that was only temporarily made available under the previous government until December last year.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, can I just take you up on that. Whether it was temporary funding or not, the fact of the matter is that the former government gave increased resources because it saw they were necessary in this area, and that related to the six or seven people that we see who now are not

continuing. But the effect of it is that, had the former government continued and decided that resources were still necessary, those temporary people could either have been continued or made permanent or whatever. The effect of it is that we have gone backwards in money and people.

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. The reality is that the former government did not consider extending those employees. It is not a case that that temporary funding ceased once we took up government. The fact is that that temporary funding and those positions ceased in December last year. If the former Attorney-General believed that the need was there for the Crime and Corruption Commission to continue that funding and continue those positions, he had every opportunity to make that decision in December last year or January or February this year and he chose not to. Those positions ceased in December last year, and the former Attorney-General chose to do nothing to continue those positions or that funding.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, we were well into caretaker mode by then. The bottom line is that this time last year there were seven more funded people working on the project than there are now.

Mrs D'ATH: Which the former Attorney-General sought to not extend beyond December last year. That was a decision of the previous LNP government.

Mr WALKER: While we are talking about outlaw motorcycle gangs, we might get on to a continuation of the discussion we had via radio yesterday in relation to the taskforce into organised crime.

CHAIR: This will be your last question too, Mr Walker.

Mr WALKER: Mr Chair, because I have a number of these questions, I will perhaps curtail my 15 minutes now and pick it up later on.

CHAIR: We might jump to government members then. I have some questions of the Crime and Corruption Commission myself. Can the CCC chair or the CEO please update the House on the research plan for the organisation?

Ms Gummow: The research plan has finally been approved. In relation to the area of major crime, the focus is going to be on research into illicit markets and groups that impact on Queensland, particularly looking at the methodologies, innovations and adaptations that these groups use to execute their crimes and avoid detection by law enforcement. In the corruption space the research section will focus on expanding the collection of analysis of our corruption data, high-risk activities, the actors, agencies and sectors. In addition to normal legislative reviews we will also look at the interrelationships between corruption and organised crime, and we will also look at the issues of police powers and their misuse, including the impact of these powers on vulnerable groups and vulnerable people.

CHAIR: There has been some media commentary of late in respect to some fraudulent activity on the Gold Coast by, I understand, the 'Irish Boys'. Would you update the committee on those activities in tackling that particular crime and those people, please?

Ms Gummow: On Monday an operation called 'Operation Unwind' was wound up which resulted in a number of charges which have been in the press this week. They relate to a series of boiler room crimes. 'Boiler rooms' is the name given to cold-calling organisations that set up dummy company after dummy company to try and fraudulently get people to invest in programs that are designed not to work. Once people realise it is not working, they then try to get their money back and discover that the company does not exist and the operation no longer exists. I understand that people can manage to buy a whole shelf company so they do not have any trading problems, so it is very difficult for people to do their due diligence. In a joint operation with the QPS we closed down the boiler rooms of the 'Irish Boys' in relation to a number of schemes and scams that they had been operating. I understand that six people have been charged at this stage and a quantity of cash and some drugs have been obtained. The taxation office were also involved and it has been very successful.

CHAIR: Well done. Could the Attorney update the committee on the progress of the appointment of the CCC chair, please?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the chair for the question. This is again an election commitment that we took to the people of Queensland. We said that we would amend the legislation to change the salary arrangements and remuneration of the chair of the CCC so that we could attract the best and the brightest to the position, understanding, as all Queenslanders do, the importance of having a strong, independent and robust watchdog in our state. We sought to bring that remuneration in line with the Supreme Court in relation to salary arrangements. That was one of the first legislative amendments we made along with the changes to electoral donations and voter ID laws. I welcomed that the opposition also supported that change in relation to the remuneration of the chair.

As is required under that act, the appointment of the chair needs to go to the PCCC for endorsement. Prior to doing that, we embarked on an open and transparent process for recruitment. Applications were made in national newspapers for the position of chair of the CCC and for the chief executive officer and also for the two part-time ordinary commissioners. I am pleased to say we were overwhelmed with applications for those positions. We then went through a short-listing process and an interviewing process to come down to a single nominee that we put forward to the PCCC. I am disappointed in the way that the PCCC chose to deal with this issue. I understand the PCCC has a very important role to play in making these decisions and by all means if members of the PCCC have issues with the candidates and want to interview them, have questions of myself as the Attorney-General or of the nominee they should undertake that process. What I do find appalling is that PCCC members are willing to not fulfil their obligations to make a decision and not because there is any issue with the nominee themselves but because of a different agenda that the opposition had, and that is to put Jeff Seeney into the chair position.

No matter what the debates and the arguments are between government and non-government members on that issue, the important position of chair of the CCC should never be used as a bargaining chip to get that sort of deal and I was appalled that that occurred. That meant significant delays in the appointment of the chair. Consequently, I am very grateful that Ann Gummow stepped up and took on the acting position and I thank her very much for doing that because she comes with a wealth of experience in this area and has done an outstanding job in continuing the great work of the CCC in that acting position. I also thank Kathleen Florian for taking on the acting CEO position while we go through the process. The chair has now been finalised, I am pleased to say, and we have now appointed Alan MacSporran as the chair of the CCC and he will take up his new position on 1 September. In accordance with the act, I now will be undertaking consultation with Alan MacSporran as the chair to consider the chief executive officer and the ordinary commissioner positions. So the delay in the appointment of the chair has now resulted in a further delay in the appointment of the CEO and the ordinary commissioners because it was appropriate for me and in accordance with the act to actually consult with the chair in relation to any consideration of whom I put forward to the PCCC for the nominees of those three other positions.

CHAIR: Thanks for that, Attorney.

Mr MADDEN: I have a question for the Attorney-General in relation to community legal centres. Could the Attorney-General outline what steps have been taken to remove the gag clause as it currently exists in the contracts that the previous LNP government had with community legal centres?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. We know that the work that the community legal centres do is extremely important. They give a voice to those most vulnerable in our community and represent them and I thank the community legal centres for the incredible work that they do. The previous government did make changes in this area and, as a consequence of funding that is provided to community legal centres, gag clauses—as they are better known—or non-advocacy clauses were implemented. That meant that if those bodies received any state government funding they were not allowed to advocate or have political comment in relation to important matters. That is extremely disappointing because, at the end of the day, community legal centres are at the forefront of supporting those most vulnerable and providing legal support, so we need to hear their views. They need to be able to come to parliamentary committees and voice their opinions. They need to be able to publicly speak up and advocate on behalf of the people that they represent, because if they do not who is going to? So I am very proud that, again, a very early act on behalf of the government was to remove those gag clauses in relation to state funding and I know it was widely welcomed by the community legal centres.

Unfortunately, our actions have been replaced by the actions of the Commonwealth in that part of the national partnership agreement has required that Commonwealth funding from this year on will have a no-advocacy clause attached to it. We—and I say 'we' as in some of the other Attorneys-General and myself—were able to at least get some movement that at least CLCs can go to parliamentary committees now and put in submissions and they will not be precluded from that. As far as making public comment and as far as advocating on behalf of the sector, if they have views on matters being put forward by the government of the day at a federal level, then they will be prohibited from doing that and I think that it is extremely disappointing that that has occurred. I do not think there is any real justification for putting these sorts of gag orders in place. At the end of the day, governments should be willing to hear views of all stakeholders. Those views might not necessarily be supportive of the government of the day's policies, but that is no reason why we should not have transparency and

accountability in our democratic system in this state and this country. We should not be afraid to hear from those who might disagree with us, because the only way change occurs is listening to those views and acting on those views going forward.

So it is disappointing. We did sign off on the national partnership agreement because I did not want to see those community legal centres have their funding delayed, but we made it very clear we do not support those gag clauses. I will continue to advocate on behalf of the community legal centres for those gag clauses to be removed. Part of that gag clause was that they could not actually advocate to the government or to government members, so a community legal centre cannot knock on the door of their local federal member and say, 'We're not happy with your policies. We don't agree with them. We want to sit down and have a talk to you.' That is advocating. That is advocating to government members on public policy and political policy. It is really disappointing that the Commonwealth has taken that action, but I am very proud to be part of a government that at least saw the benefit of removing these gag clauses and did it as soon as we possibly could on coming into government.

Mr MADDEN: Attorney, can they still knock of the door of their state member's office?

Mrs D'ATH: Absolutely, and I have strongly encouraged them to do so.

Mr MADDEN: I am pleased that they can, Attorney. Thank you.

Mr RYAN: My question is about the Information Commissioner. Attorney, how long has there been a vacancy for the position of Privacy Commissioner as part of the Office of the Information Commissioner? Are there any reasons why?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. Unfortunately this position has been vacant for the entire term of the previous government. As I understand, there was no action taken whatsoever to fill this position and that has been a real burden on the Office of the Information Commissioner because it has meant that a number of individuals have rotated through that position to be the Acting Privacy Commissioner over the past three years. I have now undertaken a process where it is being publicly advertised. Short-listing and interviews will occur so we can fill that position as soon as possible, because it is putting incredible pressure on the Office of the Information Commissioner given the fact that the former government did nothing to fill that position for the three years that they were in government.

CHAIR: I have a question with regard to the SDS at page 123 for the Public Trustee relating to community service obligations. Has the Public Trustee delivered to Queenslanders in the first financial year?

Mr Crofton: Yes. I thank the member for the question. In terms of community service obligations, the Public Trustee has a considered and very direct fiat in providing services to Queenslanders. This is particularly so in respect of some of the most vulnerable members of society. Last financial year—that is, to 30 June—a little over \$30 million was delivered by way of community service obligations. Perhaps the most significant contribution in that regard is in the area of acting as administrator for adults with an incapacity with the planning, budgeting and investment of their resources. That is essentially the role of an administrator. The majority of clients for whom the Public Trustee is appointed administrator are impecunious—that is, better than 80 per cent have fewer than \$50,000 in investable assets. In those circumstances the Public Trustee will deliver the services it offers and will rebate—that is, effectively not charge fees for doing so. The cost of the delivery of that service—the CSO rebate—was a little over \$20 million. The Public Trustee also offers a free will-making service. The cost of delivering that service was a little over \$5 million and importantly we also assist the Office of the Public Guardian by way of a grant of \$1.1 million. We also offer a service in providing some advice to members of the public in the areas in which we have some expertise, and that comes at a cost of approximately \$1.1 million. So overall the CSOs, we are very proud to say, cost \$30 million in circumstances where the Public Trustee is self-funding so there is no draw on consolidated revenue for the provision of those services.

CHAIR: Thanks very much for that. We will now return to questions from non-government members.

Mr WALKER: I might ask Mr van der Merwe to come back before we lose him. I just have one or two more questions. Mr van der Merwe, we discussed earlier the issue of returns that are lodged with you and made public and then perhaps do not match up with each other and whether you took a proactive role in sorting that out or how that was dealt with. I have done some research here on some of the third-party returns and I will give you two examples and just ask how you would deal with these issues. I am looking at the Queensland Council of Unions return which shows an amount of \$34,000 by way of a gift from the AMIEU. The AMIEU return declares nil received or given. Similarly, the

Queensland Nurses' Union on the QCU return shows a gift of \$131,180 but the QNU's return shows nil received or given. On the face of it that does not seem to match up, but do you have an explanation or what does the commission do about those apparent discrepancies?

Mr van der Merwe: Any anomalies or discrepancies like that will be investigated. We cannot just take it at face value. They will be written to and asked to please explain. If the organisation or political party says they had received it or the donor says they have not, we will get to the bottom of it. Whatever gets published has to be 100 per cent correct.

Mr WALKER: So do you do that as a matter of course?

Mr van der Merwe: Yes.

Mr WALKER: You do look at every return and cross-reference?

Mr van der Merwe: We do.

Mr WALKER: I might have misunderstood your earlier answer. I thought your earlier answer was that that was triggered by someone raising the issue or making a complaint, but I just want to get this crystal clear: part of your role is actually doing that cross-referencing and you do that with every return?

Mr van der Merwe: To the best of our ability we do, but if somebody identifies an anomaly we will act on that as well. We have some members of commission staff where wholly that is their job in terms of funding and disclosure and looking at returns and anomalies.

Mr WALKER: Just to get it quite clear: you do that off your own bat and that is done with every return?

Mr van der Merwe: Yes, we do.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. That is all for Mr van der Merwe, Mr Chair. I will continue with questions to the Attorney if I may.

CHAIR: Thanks.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, perhaps for shorthand purposes we will talk about the bikie legislation, or the VLAD legislation, meaning the suite of legislation that the taskforce is looking at. My first question to you is whether it is the government's intention to repeal the VLAD legislation?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question and, yes, I heard the debate on radio yesterday and it continued on twitter, I understand.

Mr WALKER: I think it did.

Mrs D'ATH: So I thank the member for his question, because I can now respond fulsomely. In relation to the taskforce, it is clear that the taskforce states in the terms of reference that the taskforce will note the Queensland government's intention to repeal and replace the 2013 legislation whether by substantial amendment and/or new legislation. Then it goes on to advise on a number of areas. I have heard the debate about is this predetermining the outcome by using the word 'repeal'. The fact is that if we did not put 'repeal' or 'amend', what we are saying is that they do not have the option as the taskforce to consider that. What we are saying is that, in looking at this legislation, you can only amend; however, if you consider that any one of those pieces of legislation should be repealed and replaced in full by something else, that we have not given them the scope to do so.

We made it clear going into the election—and this was a commitment that we made to the people of Queensland—that we will review this legislation and we will look at it very closely. If this legislation should be repealed and replaced with something better, that is what we will do. If it should be amended, then we will do that. In the meantime, we will leave that legislation in place so that the police and those fighting on the front line have the certainty and continuity that they need to continue to fight crime.

Can I say that our process—a public process through a taskforce review and a commission of inquiry into organised crime—is a far cry from the process of the previous government that introduced legislation at 2.30 pm on 15 October 2013; at 3 pm, briefed the opposition on the contents of the bill; and just over four and a half hours later, in a cognate debate that started at 7.41 pm, the legislation was passed at 2.50 am on 16 October—a matter of hours, 12 hours. That is how much consideration was given to this legislation—12 hours of debate, no parliamentary committee process, no consideration for the key stakeholders and for the broader community.

We have an open, transparent process where the public can make comments in relation to this taskforce, that key stakeholders can have input, that this legislation can be properly reviewed by a highly experienced taskforce membership to look at what works, what does not and what can we do better to fight organised crime.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, you have gone into all of that there a bit in respect to my simple question. My simple question is: is it this government's intention to repeal and replace the legislation?

Mrs D'ATH: We will listen to the recommendations of the taskforce.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, I will table the terms of reference, if I may, Mr Chair, and I have a copy for the Attorney.

Mrs D'ATH: I have a copy, thank you.

CHAIR: Is leave granted?

Mr WALKER: I think you have probably memorised it.

Mrs D'ATH: It is already on the public record.

Mr WALKER: If you have memorised it, Attorney, I just ask you to read for the benefit of the committee and those who are listening and watching the first sentence of the taskforce's terms of reference?

Mrs D'ATH: I just read that but for the benefit of the member I will read it again—

The Taskforce will note the Queensland Government's intention to repeal, and replace the 2013 legislation, whether by substantial amendment and/or new legislation.

Mr WALKER: Okay. So there is a clear intention to repeal and replace the legislation. The words are crystal clear.

Mrs D'ATH: By either amendment or new legislation, yes.

Mr WALKER: Whatever the method is, there will be a repeal and replacement.

Mrs D'ATH: Yes, because we have already said we will be expanding it and we will be introducing a new offence of serious organised crime that carries a maximum sentence of a life sentence.

Mr WALKER: Okay, but that does not require repeal. You used that yesterday in the debate and said, 'That's why we used the word "repeal".'

Mrs D'ATH: We have ensured that we have given the taskforce the ability to consider this legislation as a whole—to repeal either through amendments as stated in that paragraph or through new legislation. That is appropriate. There is no point saying to a taskforce, 'You can review it, but if you find that it's seriously flawed and it needs to be repealed, we are not going to let do you that. All you're allowed to do is make some amendments.' So we made sure that we gave the taskforce full scope to consider this legislation, an opportunity that certainly was not given by the previous government.

Mr WALKER: Okay. In that atmosphere of superb fairness and equity, have you given the taskforce the ability to say, 'The laws are working and should be left untouched?'

Mrs D'ATH: We have made it clear that there are a couple of areas such as the anti-association provisions and mandatory sentencing that we believe go too far and that we are seeking for input from the taskforce as to how we might get those provisions better.

Mr WALKER: But you see—

Mrs D'ATH: And we will be introducing new provisions and a new offence, as we have stated. So there will be amendments. But let us be clear—and I appreciate members of the opposition might not want to hear this—there are many, many people out there across this state who believe that the previous government got it wrong and wanted these laws reviewed. We made that election commitment and we are delivering on that election commitment. We will look at these laws and we will take the advice of the taskforce and also the commission of inquiry into organised crime and the recommendations and information that they feed into this process. That is a proper process that should be adopted when considering this legislation.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, you use the word 'review' as though it is a fair dinkum review. Is it good? Is it bad? What should we do? It is far from that and the words make it clear. The final section of the terms of reference talks about the recommendations that the taskforce is required to make. The first of those is to advise how best to repeal or replace by substantial amendment the 2013 legislation. It is not advise whether; it is advise how best to repeal. So it is not an inquiry into whether we do something about the law; this is a taskforce to tell you how to do what you want to do.

CHAIR: That is an opinion of yours, Mr Walker.

Mr WALKER: It jumps out on the page.

CHAIR: You are being very repetitious on this question. Hopefully, you have some other questions that are related to the proceedings.

Mrs D'ATH: Can I say to the member in relation to that issue and predetermining an outcome is that it is an outcome that should have been undertaken by the previous government—that there was proper consultation, consideration. This is a taskforce that is made up of the Police Service, the Police Union, the police officers union. We have the Law Society, the Bar Association, the Public Interest Monitor and representatives from relevant agencies on it. They are best placed to look at these laws.

I think we can make the laws better. I made that statement yesterday on radio, because they do not tackle organised crime more broadly. The legislation might do so but I can tell you the list of organisations that it relates to are outlaw motorcycle gangs. That is all we heard the previous government talk about for three years, outlaw motorcycle gangs. What about illicit drugs? What about money laundering? What about internet fraud and internet criminal activity? We are seeing more and more of this but there was no focus whatsoever on those issues by the previous government. They were just obsessed. This was all about outlaw motorcycle gangs.

The problem with this is that if you actually create a vacancy in this space, if you actually shut down the outlaw motorcycle gangs and fail to deal with organised crime more broadly, what you leave is a vacuum for others to fill. The fact is that the previous government did nothing to try to fill that vacuum and to look at this issue more broadly.

I also take up the ongoing criticism that we might repeal and amend this legislation and whether that is considered a negative issue. But former Premier Campbell Newman had promised to review the laws after three years with a view to a possible repeal. Those are his words.

Mr WALKER: And I do not quibble with that.

Mrs D'ATH: With a view to a possible repeal.

Mr WALKER: But this is not with a view to a possible repeal; this is to say you will repeal them.

Mrs D'ATH: He said—

... the sooner we can get rid of them the better. But it starts by seeing us get rid of the gangs.

He said—

.. the sooner we can get rid of them the better.

Mr WALKER: Absolutely and—

Mrs D'ATH: So the criticism—

CHAIR: Mr Walker, allow the minister to answer your question, thank you.

Mrs D'ATH: The criticism is that a properly constituted taskforce with expertise might spend a number of months properly reviewing legislation, taking feedback from stakeholders and individuals and businesses in relation to these laws and make recommendations to the government before the government considers what these laws should look like going forward is somehow a flawed process compared to ramming through legislation in 12 hours overnight. I know which option I prefer and I think it is the right option. It is the option we took to the people of Queensland and we are delivering on it.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, you know that the former government had to react to a particular situation when it introduced these laws and it did so forcefully, quickly and properly. The former government also agreed that there should be a review and repeal was a possibility—as you said—of that outcome. Your review does not have possibilities. Your review tells the taskforce what it is to do. The words are as clear as those written on the page—advise how best to repeal or replace. You cannot get away from that. You try to cloud the issue with saying, 'It's about motor cycle gangs.' You like to dress it up in that political term. You know as well as anybody that the first significant conviction under these laws was of a person who had nothing to do with motorcycles, but with drug running. That is what the law was about however you might want to try to colour it. You are not looking at a fair dinkum review of whether this law is working or not. You have told the taskforce the results you want and you have said you want them to advise you, not whether, but how—

CHAIR: Is there a question here, Mr Walker?

Mr WALKER: There is, Mr Chairman, but I am building up—

CHAIR: Because this is your last question.

Mr WALKER: I am building up to it just in the same way as the Attorney built up to a crescendo in her answer, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: And you have run out of time, thank you. So I am going to government members.

Mr WALKER: That was a pretty quick cut-off, Mr Chair.

Mrs SMITH: Sorry, chair, he has not.

Mr WALKER: I was just getting into my stride.

CHAIR: Sorry. I am being fair on time and I am going to a government member.

Mrs SMITH: Chair, time had not expired.

CHAIR: 10.25 and it has expired, thank you.

Mr MADDEN: I would like the committee to refocus on the Appropriation Bills which we are here to talk about today. I am interested in what the Attorney-General had to say about community legal centres. I would just like the Attorney to outline the funding challenges faced by community legal centres in providing those services to local communities across the state.

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. It certainly is a challenge in relation to the funding. I am grateful to see that this year there has been an increase in community legal centre funding under the national partnership agreement. The problem is offering additional funding for the 2015-16 year from the Commonwealth. They took away almost \$1 million from Legal Aid Queensland. In fact, it is more than \$1 million if you base that on the actual forward estimates that were to be given to Legal Aid for 2015-16. They also took away \$300,000 in funding for ATSILS—the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service—which the Commonwealth funds directly. So what we really saw is a shuffling of the deck chairs when it came to the funding that the state received to distribute to Legal Aid Queensland and community legal centres for 2015-16. There is a marginal increase but, certainly, Legal Aid Queensland has paid the price, as has the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service.

The bigger problem that all of the Attorneys-General are concerned about—and can I say it took a fair bit of fight to get that funding for this year, because there was already a 20 per cent cut last year and there was to be a significant cut this year. I am pleased to say that, across all political persuasions, all Attorneys-General came together and wrote to the Commonwealth Attorney-General talking about the impact that would have. Quite honestly, you cannot at a national level be talking about domestic and family violence, you cannot be talking about closing the gap for our Indigenous communities at the same time as cutting funding in this area. Those are the people who are supported through Legal Aid and through community legal centres and through ATSILS. So to cut their funding and then say, 'We're going to be out there supporting people through closing the gap and through domestic and family violence' is just not honest. So I was pleased to see that the money did end up being paid as far as the funding but, come 2017, the funding drops off a cliff.

There will be a significant cut, as we know, in health and education as well but certainly in the community legal centres area. There are significant cuts proposed for 2017 and we have had no response whatsoever from the Commonwealth Attorney-General in relation to guaranteeing that funding beyond that time. If the Commonwealth proceeds with the cuts, Queenslanders will receive \$2 million less in community legal centre funding per annum—per annum. So this means that vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community will miss out on vital services. I know that Legal Aid Queensland has already had to restructure this year because of their cuts. Almost \$1 million is significant. I think it is around a \$900,000 cut this year. That is significant and that has impacted and it does mean Legal Aid having to pull back on some of the services and support that it provides because of those Commonwealth cuts. So think what \$2 million a year is going to do to CLCs. I will keep fighting for the CLCs, along with my interstate colleagues, because, as I say, you cannot cut that funding and then pretend to stand on the national stage and champion for action on domestic and family violence and closing the gap. It is just not sincere.

CHAIR: It being close enough to the designated time for a break, the committee will adjourn.

Mrs D'ATH: Could I, just before our statutory authorities depart, take the opportunity to thank them for their great work, and not just a lot of work in preparing for estimates this morning but their ongoing work throughout the year. They do tireless work. All of our statutory bodies do important work serving the community and serving the Public Service and I thank all of them for the work that they do.

CHAIR: The committee joins you in that acknowledgement as well.

Proceedings suspended from 10.30 am to 10.46 am

 **CHAIR:** This hearing before the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is now resumed and will be focusing on the portfolio area of Justice and Attorney-General. Attorney, I understand that you have some responses from today's proceedings.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Chair. Just a couple of points of clarification. In my opening statement I referred to \$1.1 million in relation to the budget for the Domestic Violence Court. The \$1.1 million is for the Legal Aid Queensland Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer Service which I did mention, but the Domestic Violence Specialist Magistrates Court is \$327,000 in the budget. Also in relation to the no-advocacy clauses I just wanted to clarify that it applied to social services organisations which received 50 per cent or more of their total income from the Queensland government and those are the organisations that the no-advocacy or gag clauses related to.

I also have the question taken on notice by the CCC in relation to the breakdown of staffing for 2015-16 in the Crime and Corruption Commission for specific service areas and I am able to table that.

CHAIR: Thank you. Leave is granted. Mr Walker?

Mr WALKER: Thank you, Mr Chair. Attorney, just back to the taskforce into the bikie legislation, again for want of a shorthand term. Can you give me some idea of the resourcing that has been given to that taskforce No. 1; and, No. 2, the actual people who are on it—I think you have referred in general terms to where they have come from, but who constitutes the taskforce; and what the forward program is given that the taskforce has to respond by Christmas by way of public hearings of that taskforce?

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you. I might start with the last issue first which is the public hearings. That is an issue for the taskforce to consider: how it will collect its submissions and the views of individuals. You will see in the terms of reference in the paragraph below item 12 it talks about the taskforce shall invite or receive submissions or information from external sources where it is relevant to the terms of reference, and it goes on to say 'including but not limited to' and it refers to academics and experts, law enforcement, intelligence, prosecution agencies, government agencies and it also says any individual, business group, association or other entity. We have left it, obviously, appropriately, for the taskforce to consider how it will collect that information. Also I am aware that if you go onto the public website for the taskforce you will see a tab there you can click on to submit. So, anyone, any individual, any organisation, can go onto the public website and click 'submit' and put in their own submissions as well. But as far as any hearings, that is a question of the taskforce and not of myself.

In relation to the membership of the taskforce I can advise that the Bar Association of Queensland's representatives are Mr Anthony Glynn QC and Mr Ralph Devlin QC. These people will be alternate representatives to accommodate external commitments preventing attendance at some meetings. From the Queensland Law Society it is Mr Glen Cranny, partner from Gilshenan & Luton legal practice; from the Queensland Police Commissioned Officers' Union it is Mr Brian Wilkins, detective superintendent of Intelligence Counter-Terrorism and Major Events Command; from the Queensland Police Union it is Mr Ian Leavers, general president and CEO; from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is Christine Castley, senior executive director, social policy; for the Queensland Police Service it is Mr Ross Barnett, Deputy Commissioner, Specialist Operations and Mr Bob Gee, Assistant Commissioner, Operational Capability Command; from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General it is Ms Natalie Parker, Acting Assistant Director-General of strategic policy and legal services; and the Public Interest Monitor, Mr Peter Lyons.

In relation to the budget for the taskforce, as has been stated, the taskforce is to report on 18 December 2015. The cost is estimated at \$597,000 being for the 2015-16 year; \$422,000 will be funded by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General with a contribution from the Queensland Police Service of \$175,000.

Mr WALKER: Thank you, Attorney. If I go back then to the terms of reference and in particular to the area that you drew my attention to with respect to the people with whom the taskforce is required to consult, they include academics, experts, law enforcement agencies, government and an individual person or group that claims to have been affected by the legislation. It seems to me there are a couple of glaring non-inclusions there, namely the broader public are not referred to, nor victims of crime. Did you give thought to that when you were settling the people to whom you specifically directed the taskforce to confer?

Mrs D'ATH: In relation to victims of crime, I would think that they are people who have been or claim to have been affected by these laws, if you are stating that they may be victims of organised crime, and so they would be specifically identified there in that last dot point. In relation to the broader public, I just draw your attention to the opening sentence there saying that this is including but not limited to, and I have already drawn your attention to the public website that has no restrictions or limitations. Anyone who wants to submit a submission online through the public website can do so.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, can you just tell me who you consulted in relation to the drafting of the terms of reference?

Mrs D'ATH: I have consulted with the chair. In appointing the chair and approaching the chair, being Alan Wilson, I also asked for his input in relation to the terms of reference. Crown Law had input into the terms of reference. This is a matter that has been considered by the cabinet more broadly.

Mr WALKER: Did you have any specific contact with victims of crime in settling the terms of reference?

Mrs D'ATH: Not specifically, no. As you are aware, they form part of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General in relation to Victim Assist so all of those views are sort of taken into consideration through the representatives from people from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General in drafting up the terms of reference.

Mr WALKER: You mentioned that the cost of the taskforce was \$597,000. Can you tell me what that amount is by way of payment to taskforce members and which of the members are being paid?

Mrs D'ATH: I will just see if the Director-General is able to assist with the breakdown of those. Obviously there are fees being paid to the chair. I am not aware of fees necessarily being paid to the individual members, but I will just ask for the Director-General to clarify that.

Mr Mackie: Thank you very much. We haven't got the breakdown right at the moment so if I may take that on notice.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. Attorney, in relation to the submissions that are made to the taskforce, are you able to give us an undertaking that the submissions made will be public, with appropriate privacy safeguards, of course, but that it will be clear what people are saying to the taskforce and how it comes to its eventual conclusions?

Mrs D'ATH: Yes, and I can advise that if you go to the public website and the tab under 'submissions to the taskforce' it does indicate that the submissions will be published on the website.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. Just one final question on that whole issue, Attorney: Mr Wilson, when he was questioned about the taskforce, gave his view that this was about whether the law should be tweaked. Given the terms of reference and the extensive discussion we have had about that, do you agree that that is an appropriate assessment of the taskforce's role?

Mrs D'ATH: I am not going to reflect on the comments of the chair. I think we have chosen an outstanding chair who comes with a breadth of experience and skills in undertaking the review of this legislation. I heard the debate yesterday about the word 'tweaking' and I do believe that it is a bit of semantics. At the end of the day it is about having a proper review of the legislation. That is what we are undertaking, that is what we are committed to do, and I am very confident that the members of this taskforce will undertake their job with the relevant skills and experience I know they have and fulfil their obligations to consider all of the issues that are important and the submissions that will come before them in weighing up what recommendations it puts forward to the government.

Mr WALKER: While we are talking about reviews, Attorney, who is undertaking the review of Labor's Criminal Organisation Act 2009? That was due to commence as soon as practicable after 15 April this year.

Mrs D'ATH: We are working through that at the moment and I am very close to appointing someone to consider the review of the relevant legislation you refer to. As you appreciate, that requires a retired judge of the Supreme Court to review that legislation so it is looking at availability of retired Supreme Court judges and those who are able to take on the work. But I do have a proposed nominee at the moment and I would not announce it until obviously I have finalised those discussions with that individual.

Mr WALKER: That review, Attorney, seems to have been much more under the radar than the other reviews; people wouldn't know much about it or that it is happening.

Mrs D'ATH: It is a statutory review. There are many statutory reviews that are ongoing and are undertaken every single year under various governments of the day. It is a normal process. It will be undertaken through the normal steps that are required under a statutory review. There is nothing unique or different about this statutory review to any others, other than I would expect anything that comes out of that review would also be fed into the taskforce.

Mr WALKER: Do you anticipate any public consultation as part of that review?

Mrs D'ATH: That would be up to the chair. As I say, there is nothing unique about this statutory review. It will be undertaken like all other statutory reviews and I will leave it to the relevant judge who will be undertaking that review to consider how he or she will undertake that process.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, if I can now go to Legal Aid; you did mention Legal Aid in some of your comments. There is a looming and growing problem in relation to state government's commitment to funding of Legal Aid because of the LPITAF issue. That is the funding that is basically sourced through interest on legal practitioners' trust accounts. Two things are happening, of course: people are doing more electronic transactions and therefore there are less funds in the solicitor's account and when funds are in the solicitor's account they tend to be there now for less time than they used to be. The decline in trust account use generally and the impact of electronic banking must be of concern to you with respect to future Legal Aid funding and I think, if I am correct, that funding also goes towards Mr Clauson's office—all or some of it helps fund his office. I am just wondering whether you or the government has given any attention, in relation to state government's part in Legal Aid funding, to the long-term potential crisis that that heralds?

Mrs D'ATH: The member certainly is right in relation to what is known as LPITAF in that the revenue has been declining for some time. Since 2008-09 it has been significantly impacted by the global economic conditions back then. The expected progressive increase in electronic property settlements will also impact future revenue. Both of those factors are included in the government's purpose-built forecasting model. In 2012, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General undertook a review, as you would be aware, of the allocation of funds from the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund. The review recommended a strategic funding model that would improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, and accountability and transparency in the allocation and use of public funds. The department implemented the model in 2013-14 in partnership with the legal assistance, legal profession regulation and the law library services sector. Under the model, the service development improvement funding provides for strategic innovation. The SDIF, as it is known, is only offered if there is sufficient funding for initiatives to progress to service delivery funding in the next investment cycle and the SDIF will not be available in 2014-15 given the impact of global economic conditions on LPITAF revenue. Funding is allocated from LPITAF to community organisations, mostly community legal centres, via Legal Aid Queensland to pay for items such as the bulk purchase of solicitors' professional indemnity insurance. From 2014-15 this bulk and sundry expense fund has operated as a draw-down facility to maximise interest revenue earned on those moneys.

In relation to ongoing assistance, you might be aware that during the state election the Queensland Law Society's call to parties raised the issue of a commitment to increase the level of state funding for legal aid. We certainly gave a commitment, recognising that the funding of legal aid has reduced in real terms over many years. Labor recognised that a traditional method of funding legal aid and community legal centres through LPITAF could no longer meet the demands placed on the service, which has worsened in light of increasing mandatory penalties and increasing incarceration rates. A Labor government will review the available funding sources for legal aid, with a view to increasing over time the funding provided for state funded legal assistance services to a level that is at least equal to the national average per capita. As the member would be aware, we fall well behind some of the other states when it comes to legal aid funding. It is true to say that funding is supplemented by consolidated funds and that LPITAF, in the long-term, is not sustainable in its current system.

In my first six months in the role of Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, I have certainly turned my mind to this. I have had discussions with stakeholders in relation to this issue and will be continuing to do work with the department about what sort of alternatives there are or how this funding might be provided into the future, because there is no doubt that the funding needs to continue. We need to continue to support Legal Aid Queensland and the Legal Services Commission, the library services and community legal centres through that legal aid funding. We do need to find new models and new ways to fund it.

CHAIR: Last question, Mr Walker.

Mr WALKER: Attorney-General, I refer to your party policy with respect to a protocol for the appointment of judicial officers and your commitment to me in parliament towards the end of March that you would get that going and involve me in that process, for which I thank you. I am concerned, as you know, that that protocol is not in place for the current appointment of a Chief Justice. That is the most important appointment we could have in the short term. I am disappointed that you have not been able to get it in place for that. Can you tell me what your time line is for establishing that protocol and how you intend to establish the protocol? What process will you go through?

Mrs D'ATH: Yes, certainly it was an election commitment and an undertaking of this government to establish a protocol for judicial appointments going forward. There is work being done in looking at what other examples there are, nationally and internationally, in relation to the sorts of models of what a protocol might look like. I hope to have a discussion paper that I would like to circulate for the legal

profession, the judiciary, the public more broadly and the opposition to consider and have input into, so they can put ideas forward. I do make it clear and I have made it clear in the past that whatever protocol we come up with, there should be an acknowledgement that the government of the day—and the Attorney-General is the person, rightly so—makes that final decision as far as who the nominee should be. However, I do believe that that decision should be guided by a broader, more transparent process about how nominations are put forward and, importantly, looking at what sort of criteria and what skill sets we are looking for.

We do have a very important appointment coming up, the Chief Justice appointment, but it is not just about the Chief Justice and it was never about the Chief Justice. Certainly, how the appointment occurred under the previous government was the impetus for us to announce that we would establish a protocol, but we did not expect to necessarily be appointing a new Chief Justice in our first term of government. This is more broadly across the Supreme Court, across the District Court and across the Magistrates Court. We need to have more guidance about the skill set. We know that there is a minimum requirement of how long they have been in the legal profession, but I think when we are looking at appointments we need to look more at what sort of skill set we need from someone who is going to be sitting there making decisions as a magistrate, District Court or Supreme Court judge, a member of the Court of Appeal or Chief Justice, looking at who is the best person for the job. It is our obligation to ensure that our courts and our judicial system is representative of our broader community. How we get diversity in the membership of our judicial system, as well. Those are the sorts of things that I am considering.

I stand by my commitment to have consultation with the opposition in progressing that process. I am sure that the member will willingly come forward and have some input into that, but I am mindful that in the position put forward by the LNP following the Queensland Law Society's call to parties, they actually said that they were satisfied with the current process, that it serves Queensland well and that the Newman LNP government had no plans to alter the current arrangements for appointment to judicial office in Queensland. I know that the starting point of the opposition is that they think the current process is fine, but I think the community wants and needs a little bit more transparency around those processes and I think that can be done by a protocol.

Mr WALKER: And the time line, Attorney?

Mrs D'ATH: I do not have a fixed time line. There are many things I am undertaking at the moment. First and foremost, I am committed to delivering on all my election commitments in this term of government and that is what I intend to do. I would like to get this protocol out for discussion this year, but I do not have a fixed time frame for actually implementing that protocol.

CHAIR: Thank you, Attorney. The next series of questions will come from government members. I ask the youth justice people to come to the table. I go to the member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Chair. Attorney, as you know, the policy area of youth justice is a particular passion of mine. I again pay tribute to the great youth justice workers of the Caboolture Youth Justice Centre. Again I thank you for visiting them a couple of months ago. They still talk about your wonderful visit. Thank you, Attorney. I have a number of questions in this space. The first question is: what is the government's approach to youth justice and what does the evidence in this policy area say?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question and I thank him for the invitation to go to the Caboolture youth service. They certainly do great work, as do our youth justice workers and our community youth workers across this state.

The government is committed to creating a balanced youth justice system that is evidence based and is effective in reducing youth offending. At the 2015 state election, the government committed to repealing previous amendments made to the Youth Justice Act 1992, to reinstate court referred youth justice conferencing and to evaluate the youth boot camps. The previous government introduced those amendments with the view that stronger penalties and negative consequences for repeat offenders would be effective in reducing offending. This is inconsistent with the substantial evidence showing that increasing the severity of punishment is an ineffective means of reducing relapses to undesirable behaviour, particularly in relation to young people.

The evidence tells us that intervening early to address the underlying causes of a young person's offending is essential to preventing further offending and a life of crime. Equally, engaging in families and other major stakeholders, such as education and health, is essential to addressing the risk factors that cause the offending. The findings of the KPMG report state that one of the real failings from both the sentence youth boot camp and the early intervention boot camp is the lack of engagement with

families, broader stakeholders and especially our Indigenous elders, considering the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in this space. The government is committed to developing evidence based interventions based on research and evaluations to respond to young people at risk of becoming lifelong offenders and young people already entrenched in offending behaviour. This work represents the start in transforming Queensland's youth justice system into one that addresses the causes of offending, ensures young people are held responsible for their behaviours, gets positive outcomes for young people and their families and victims, and leads to safer and stronger communities. This commitment is already being put into action.

Youth Justice, in collaboration with government and non-government partners, is developing a suite of actions to reduce the high number of young people held in detention or remand, improving a young person's transition from the justice system back into community to reduce their reoffending, and implementing responses to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous young people in the justice system. Importantly, they are implementing a trauma informed care model for working with young people to recognise the high level of trauma that young people often experience, which influences their offending behaviours. I have visited both the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre and the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre. When you hear of the trauma that a lot of those young people have experienced in their lives, we have to look at those underlying problems. We have to look at the broader family situation and support mechanisms around them if we are to have any chance of changing the pattern of reoffending, rather than simply putting them in youth detention. In some cases, can I say, certainly from what I experienced in the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, what they get in a youth detention centre is probably a safer environment than what they have at home. We need to make sure that we have other mechanisms and other processes, a multifaceted approach, to supporting young people who are offending. Certainly they should have to face the consequences of the crimes they commit, but we also want to make sure they do not commit any further crimes in the future.

In relation to this point, and you will probably hear me say this a couple of times today, there is a belief that we have an ever-increasing number of youth crimes or youths committing crimes in this state. That is not the case. What we have is an increase in youth reoffending, so the same youths reoffending, and an increase in the seriousness of the crimes that they are committing. We really need to start targeting those offenders to stop reoffending if we want to break the cycle. The figures are something like 10 per cent of all youth offenders commit almost 50 per cent of the crimes. If we do not start tackling that issue more broadly and looking at the underlying problems of why they are offending, then we are not going to break the cycle.

I am very pleased to advise the member that this government has committed \$23.6 million over the next four years to reintroduce the court ordered youth justice conferencing. The government has also committed \$1.75 million through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, which is my other portfolio, to work with 500 young offenders, which will also help them get back into education, training or employment.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Attorney. It is very pleasing to hear about this government's commitment to youth justice conferencing. It is a very important strategy. Attorney, you referred to some of the previous government's policies in your answer just now. One of those policies was the government's boot camp policy. Can you outline some of the costs that were incurred under that policy and perhaps provide some commentary in connection to the KPMG report that you have tabled?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. The previous government piloted what was to be a two-year boot camp program in an attempt to reduce reoffending. This government has fulfilled its election commitment to independently evaluate the youth boot camp pilot.

This evaluation has revealed that the cost of the trial was significantly impacted by a number of decisions made by the former Attorney-General, including awarding contracts to providers for the Fraser-Sunshine Coast early intervention youth boot camp and a sentence youth boot camp that contradicted departmental advice and did not demonstrate value for money. They expanded the trial to four locations instead of two and ran the trial for an additional year. They established the residential phase of the sentenced youth boot camp in a remote location that lacked service support and introduced the programs quickly with limited community engagement.

As I understand it, a decision was made in late December to lease the Lincoln Springs property. The boot camp had to be up and running by 27 December. There was an official from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General who was told on Christmas Eve that this had to be up and running between Christmas and New Year's Eve.

A lot of the infrastructure and buildings that are now on site were not there at the time that the youth were first sent out to the boot camp. They basically threw a couple of demountables out there as quickly as possible and did not wait until the site was fully established before they started sending young people out to this boot camp.

The trial cost \$16.7 million over three years, \$14.7 million more than the original \$2 million allocated for the trial. This additional funding has been sourced from internal departmental savings and there is no funding allocated for youth boot camps to continue. I make the point that this was a trial for which the contracts were until September and October of this year, with the sublease on the Lincoln Springs property until December this year. All of these contracts extended beyond 30 June this year, except there was no funding allocated in the budget to continue to fund these trials and certainly not to extend these trials.

I believe that my department has had to find over \$3 million from 1 July to see out these contracts that are currently in operation. We know that intervention is costly, but for the 260 young people who attended boot camps there was a significant cost to the community. This pilot was significantly more expensive than youth detention.

I can report to this committee that some of the \$16.7 million in costs for the pilot included \$2.6 million in contract payments for the early intervention youth boot camps, \$6.3 million in contract payments to the Lincoln Springs sentenced youth boot camp, \$4.6 million in capital costs associated with the establishment of the Lincoln Springs sentenced youth boot camp, \$1.1 million for correctional and detention staff at the Lincoln Springs sentenced youth boot camp, \$600,000 for the sublease, establishment and maintenance costs for Lincoln Springs and another \$900,000 in project, legal, travel and provider training costs. The remaining amount of \$600,000 was for procurement, evaluation and costs of the first failed boot camp in Kuranda.

The previous government allocated just \$2 million for this trial and the department was forced to fund the additional \$14.7 million in costs caused by the former attorney-general's interference with the procurement process, the sudden expansion of the trial and the rushed implementation time frames contrary to departmental advice. The breakdown of costs is considerable, but I will not go through each and every one, although I am happy to do so. Some \$16.695322 million is the total cost that we have incurred in relation to these boot camps. It is quite concerning certainly. KPMG has identified that significant profits, can I say, were also made by these providers. In the case of Lincoln Springs, over \$500,000 profit was made out of this project.

Mr RYAN: It is very concerning. In respect of the Auditor-General's report into the boot camp program, who was the subject decision-maker that the Auditor-General criticised?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. The Auditor-General's report was delivered on 9 April—report No. 13 of 2014-15 on the procurement of boot camps. This report by the independent Auditor-General speaks volumes about how the former attorney-general operated and the mess he has left in his wake. This was nothing short, can I say, of political interference in the awarding of multimillion dollar contracts—interference from the then attorney-general that went against explicit advice of his department and with no justification, no evidence, no reason provided for doing so. The Auditor-General concluded—

The lack of transparency ... ultimately leaves the process of awarding the two contracts open to accusations of favouritism, which in the absence of a clear documentation trail, cannot be readily rebutted.

The report demonstrates that there was no issue with the department run panel process or the recommendations from the panels. I thank the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for all of their work. I am in no way critical of the work they have done and the ongoing work they are doing to ensure that these boot camps operate and to ensure the safety of the youths at these facilities.

The probity adviser verified that a proper process had been followed by the department. The problem was the intervention of the former attorney-general. The report found that the former attorney-general's decision to award contracts for the Fraser Coast and Lincoln Springs boot camps were not the best choices and that there were suitable lower cost service providers available. In awarding the Fraser Coast early intervention boot camp the then attorney-general rejected the panel's assessment and awarded it to one described as unsuitable. It was the 10th ranked and most expensive of the tenders. There was no documentation to support the decision. The former attorney-general decided to amalgamate the Cairns and Townsville sentenced youth boot camp into a super boot camp. This was not subject to a separate expression of interest. The former attorney-general advised the Auditor-General that he awarded the contract on his own review using information supplied for separate camps. This was simply described by the auditor as unsafe.

This is the heart of the matter. The substantive issues raised in the report are the lack of evidence to document the former attorney-general's decision-making processes in relation to intervening in the tender process, rejecting the recommendations of the independent panel and awarding the contract to a handpicked provider. The Auditor-General said in his response to the former attorney-general—

As you have not addressed this matter in your response, I take this as your confirmation that no such evidence exists.

That is at page 52 of the audit report. Despite being given ample opportunity to provide the information, despite pages and pages of responses to the Auditor-General, the former attorney-general could not provide even basic evidence of why he intervened to overturn the independent panel's advice nor provide any detail or record of his decision-making. It is political interference of the worst kind. I would just like to very briefly go to the KPMG report itself in relation to the findings. I might come back to that because I have lost the page.

CHAIR: I will go to questions from non-government members.

Mr WALKER: While we are on the boot camps, I point out that I obviously have not had a chance to read the report given that it was tabled during the hearing. I note that the report recommends that the Gold Coast project continue. Did I understand you correctly to say that you were not intending to do that?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. That is correct. The government has made a decision to not renew all of the contracts at the point that they expire in September and October, and that includes the Gold Coast contract. It is true to say that in the KPMG report that the Gold Coast early intervention youth boot camp did have more positive outcomes than all the others. Having said that, there were also issues raised in relation to the cohort that was actually being selected to go through the Gold Coast early intervention program.

It is not a rolling process to actually go to the boot camp. The Gold Coast one is a 10-day residential phase. It is not the case that when an individual is identified—and generally they are identified through the Department of Education and Training—they do not get to go straight into the program. The boot camp operators actually wait until they have a sufficient number of youth to justify actually holding the residential phase. It could be that they could be waiting months before they actually get to go on the 10-day residential component.

What we found is that the cohort is not reflective of those going on to offend. In respect of the Gold Coast specifically only nine per cent of the youth who have gone through that program are Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander. We know that Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander youth represent around 64 per cent of those who are in youth detention.

If you want to make a difference you have to make sure these programs are targeting the cohort who are offending long term. There are certainly lessons to be learnt. Certainly we would take the information that has come out of the KPMG report and look at what the programs are going forward. I can assure the member that transition processes will be put in place immediately these program cease. Youths will go into specific programs already operating in regard to youth justice. I have briefly touched on some of the other changes we will be making into the future.

The problem with the Gold Coast program, along with a lot of the early intervention youth boot camps, is that they were not targeting the right cohort. When it comes to recidivism and early intervention boot camps, five per cent of the youth who went into those programs had committed offences. At the end of the program eight per cent of youth have committed offences. The number of youth offending has increased from the intake that has gone through the early intervention boot camps. When it comes to recidivism in the sentenced youth boot camp that figure is much higher.

Mr WALKER: The Gold Coast one is the one that, I think, is sponsored by Keith Payne VC. Have you visited that boot camp?

Mrs D'ATH: I have not been to the Gold Coast one.

Mr WALKER: If we get onto the alcohol fuelled violence issue please. You have held an industry round table in respect of this matter. That only occurred after our question on notice. I wonder why it was that it took a question on notice to trigger you talking to the industry about the matter?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I appreciate the opposition are claiming credit for having a round table and that it resulted from their question on notice. I can assure the member that it was my intention all along to have a round table. I should say that I had numerous individual discussions with stakeholders leading up to the round table. I have had meetings and attended forums which they were at and had discussions with them. The round table was not the first time that I had been consulting with stakeholders in relation to this issue.

Very early on I did make the decision that what I wanted to do was get everyone in the same room. It is easy having one-on-one conversations with individuals about their concerns on these issues. I believe it is important to get all stakeholders on all sides of the debate in the same room being able to express their views on the government's election commitment and policy going forward. There were over 60 representatives who attended that event in Parliament House. I thank them for attending it. I believe it was a very worthwhile opportunity to hear many of those views. I will continue to have those discussions going forward in framing any legislative changes in this area.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, the time frame is that there was a question on notice asked on 24 July, invitations went out on the 27th for the round table on 6 August. There does seem to be a connection with a bit of prodding happening there.

Mrs D'ATH: I can absolutely assure the member that we did not suddenly throw together a list in 24 hours. We were already working on the round table well before the member put a question on notice. As I say, there were also other forums—one in April. I do not think the member can claim that one. But there was a forum in April that I also attended that had stakeholders there and the commissioner of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation was in attendance.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, there are still some people or groups interested in the matter who say they have not found it possible to speak with you about the matter. What is your response to that?

Mrs D'ATH: I get many requests for meetings in my office. I will work to meet with any stakeholder who has an interest in this area who wishes to talk to me about the government's policy.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, in relation to alcohol fuelled violence—and it is referred to on page 4 of the SDS—are you still committed to implementing Labor Party policy to its full extent? That is the 10-point plan for tackling alcohol fuelled violence. That is the policy which you took to the 2015 election, and I table a copy of that, if I may.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mrs D'ATH: I can advise the member that we remain committed to delivering on all of our election commitments. That includes taking a multifaceted approach to dealing with alcohol fuelled violence. That is why this year we have budgeted for \$9.6 million over the next three years to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General which feeds into a total of \$32.1 million over four years across government to address the issues statewide. These initiatives are being implemented based on evidence and best practice for reducing alcohol related harm. So certainly we stand by our election commitments in this area in that we are funding and I believe funding in excess of what the previous government allocated for the Safe Night Out Strategy.

Mr WALKER: If you are committed to all of those points, point No. 6—I do not know if you need the document; I expect you will not—is the one that says—

Empower police to breathalyse intoxicated or disorderly patrons for the possible prosecution of patrons, management and licensees who have breached regulations of the *Liquor Act 1992*

Do you still stand by that point in the policy?

Mrs D'ATH: I stand by that point in the policy. I am certainly bemused by the media commentary around this and the claims by the opposition that this was in any way—and I am happy for you to point to it in the policy—meant that we were going to have police wandering around inside of our venues breathalysing random patrons. There is nothing in the policy that says that. I think it is insulting to the police and to the government to suggest that that was always the intention.

The fact is that the police have some powers in relation to breathalysing people, but we believe those powers need to be widened. So when there has been an assault in relation to alcohol fuelled harm and the police believe that person is intoxicated—you have to remember that this is not in relation to motor vehicles; they can breathalyse people in relation to motor vehicles currently; this is in relation to someone who has got into a serious fight outside of a venue potentially and they have been arrested by the police—they should be able to breathalyse them to see if that person is heavily intoxicated. If, based on that, there is further evidence that the venue that that person has been in was not serving alcohol responsibly and in breach of other legislation, then further action can be taken.

Mr WALKER: That is again not what the policy says. I know you will say it is semantics but words do matter. The policy says you will empower police to breathalyse intoxicated or disorderly persons—two separate categories. How are the police going to identify intoxicated persons who are not otherwise committing a crime or doing things that would attract attention without some form of random testing?

Mrs D'ATH: Those are the things we are working through with the Queensland Police Service in developing the implementation of this policy. That is why I am consulting and working with the key stakeholders to ensure that we get it right and to make sure that the police can do their job and do it properly and we can start tackling alcohol fuelled violence around our towns and cities and licensed venues. You talk about semantics and you want to point to particular wording and say the wording does not reflect that but nor does the wording reflect the comments from the opposition—the quite absurd comments made by the opposition—about police wandering through venues and breathalysing people.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, I take you to your own words then, and I seek leave to table a report from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* which quotes you in respect of these matters.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? There being no objection, leave is granted.

Mr WALKER: I will give you a copy of that in case you need to refer to it. On page 2 of 3—I am about halfway down the first column where the article talks about a quote from yourself—

“Allowing police to breathalyse drunken patrons will help them to build cases for prosecution for court,” said Ms D'Ath.

That was subsequently followed by a media release from you, which said—

There is no plan to random breath-test drinkers and there never has been.

I am still confused about how the police are to be given the power to breathalyse apparently drunken patrons without doing so in what would be called a random manner.

Mrs D'ATH: There is nothing in there that says police will be going into licensed venues and breathalysing. It gives me a great opportunity to correct the *Gold Coast Bulletin* in the sense that they did speak to my office to get an explanation of what our policy is. I do not believe they accurately reported and they did not talk to me whatsoever. So when it says that is a direct quote from me it is incorrect. The *Gold Coast Bulletin* actually never had a conversation with me about it. So I take this opportunity to say to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* that it should starting reporting more accurately.

In relation to the statement itself, there is nothing there whatsoever that leads to the assertion being made by the member and by the opposition that it now means that breathalysing will occur inside licensed venues. But when there are incidents on footpaths outside of venues where it appears that individuals are intoxicated and the police are called or the police are present in particularly the precincts, then the police will have the powers to breathalyse. As I understand it, those laws and powers of the police were extended in part by the LNP. So it was a process that the previous government started, and we will ensure that they have the adequate powers that they need. But the police and the Police Union have been very involved in the process and in discussions with me about how we further develop these.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, does that leave open what you have said? You say it will not be inside premises. Does it leave open the fact that a person who the police stop and say, 'We think you are intoxicated,' who has not otherwise committed an offence could under your plan still be breathalysed? Is that your intention?

Mrs D'ATH: I see no reason why the police would breathalyse someone who is not showing signs of aggression or violence. The police have enough to do other than wandering through a venue randomly breathalysing people. We are talking about in relation to prosecutions and strengthening prosecutions of individuals and also where licensed venues are not serving alcohol responsibly. But it is not the job of police to go into a venue and breathalyse people to find out whether that person has been served alcohol and that the venue has not been serving that responsibly. This is about safety and this is about where the police are required to intervene in relation to an individual and their behaviour and consequently that they have the powers to do what they need to do in relation to assessing the level of intoxication of that individual. So it is not random. It is about actually responding to incidents that the police are called to.

CHAIR: I am going to go to the member for Morayfield and also ask the official for Youth Justice Services to come to the table again.

Mr RYAN: Attorney, you were looking to the KPMG report before for a particular reference. Are you able to elaborate further on that reference in the KPMG report?

Mrs D'ATH: In relation to the KPMG report the particular area I am looking for is in relation to the key findings. The key findings found that this was a rushed process. It was a politically driven process. There were insufficient mechanisms to engage with families and key stakeholders around it. There was

insufficient evidence to show that the models that were being used were based around evidence based models of early intervention. I think that is quite damning of the report when it points out those key findings being that there was really interference in this process and it was rushed, as we know. Quite honestly I think it put young people at risk because proper processes were not followed.

Mr RYAN: I want to focus a little bit more on one particular site, and perhaps this is a question for the Assistant Director-General, Mr Harvey. Why did you choose the Lincoln Springs site as the preferred site for a boot camp in that location?

Mr Harvey: There was an expression of interest done to try to select a site and there were no suitable properties found. There were also approaches to Natural Resources and Mines to find further properties and there was in fact no suitable property found. The department then was contacted by a stock and land agent who said they had an available property and that is how we arrived at Lincoln Springs.

Mr RYAN: Were other options considered?

Mr Harvey: There were a range of other places considered at the time, yes.

Mr RYAN: But the particular decision to choose Lincoln Springs was a policy decision of the government at the time.

Mr Harvey: Of the government. In terms of its remoteness, that was why it was attractive.

Mr RYAN: On that point of remoteness, did that contribute to the costs of the Lincoln Springs site and the camp there?

Mr Harvey: It certainly contributed to the costs because the camp was a remote rural property. It was a rural cattle farm. It only had a farmhouse and needed quite substantial changes in infrastructure to make it safe for young people. Obviously being quite remote it attracted a fair amount of cost to do that.

Mr RYAN: Just to get this right, it was pretty much an old farmhouse beforehand with no relevant infrastructure to operate essentially a detention facility for young offenders.

Mr Harvey: You could say that, yes.

Mr RYAN: Attorney, that is quite revealing to some extent, that a policy decision could be made in those circumstances. I wanted to ask in particular in reference to the equipment and transferable buildings that might be on that Lincoln Springs site, are any of those buildings or equipment recoverable and are there any impediments to recovering that quite valuable investment?

Mrs D'ATH: Because of the remoteness of the site, considerable expense was incurred in actually getting the demountable buildings out there. It is 3½ hours out from Ingham. You have to go across a lot of dusty roads and cattle grids to get out there. The nearest airstrip is another hour away. I do have concerns about how the property might have been chosen simply because I have not been able to get any straight answers. There does not seem to be a lot of documentation around this. Like the selection of the providers, it seems to have been very much centrally controlled by the former attorney-general. There does not seem to be much documentation as to how this property was chosen. I can really only be drawn to the fact that in the Auditor-General's report it talks about the former director-general's response to the Auditor-General's draft report and the queries around the selection of the property. It talks about how Beyond Billabong identified potential properties for the sentenced youth boot camp in their tender. However, these properties were no longer available when the Attorney-General awarded the sentenced youth boot camp contract. Beyond Billabong was then actively involved in the search for a suitable property for DJAG. Having a site in such a remote area does create risks. If a young person or a staff member needs to be evacuated quickly, it is very difficult to do so. As I heard personally when I visited the site, if a child is showing suicidal ideations to the point that they believe that person needs to be hospitalised or taken to the hospital, they put them in a car for the next 3½ hours to drive them there. That is very concerning. I should clarify that it is two hours from Ingham and 3½ hours from Townsville.

In relation to the demountable buildings, the department has said to me that we are looking at a cost of around half a million dollars to relocate those buildings. I would rather relocate them because we have to get some money back out of these facilities, but it will come at a considerable cost. That is just the transportation. The costings and the invoices I have seen in relation to hooking these demountables up to electricity, water and so forth are quite considerable. It is not just the transportation of these buildings; it is also hooking them up to services once they are there.

I have finally found that page for the member so I can accurately quote what is in the KPMG report. With regard to the program design key findings—so this is the design of the program—it states—

4. The establishment of the program occurred in a short time frame and was driven by an election commitment without a strong policy basis
5. The lack of community engagement with key stakeholders during the planning and design (and later implementation ...) has negatively impacted the perception of the program, in the case of the SYBC in particular, has impacted participation rates and is likely to impact the effectiveness of the program
6. The remote location of the SYBC inhibits the delivery of family support and community integration
7. Sentencing practice presents difficulties in building teams and inter-personal relationships, as well as giving the potential for inappropriate mixes of genders or individual offenders

When I visited, there was one young female and three young men out there. You have to remember that a number of young people—male and female but particularly female—in the youth justice system have been the subject of sexual assault. So you really have to be conscious of these things when they are there. They are in a residential facility in such a remote area, and they are staying in individual accommodation that at night is locked down for their own safety. That concerns me because of the hanging points and the risk that I saw when I looked inside those demountable buildings as compared to youth detention centres which I have been to. I have also been to a prison and just about every immigration detention centre across this country. When I am being told there are young people on site who have suicidal ideations and they are being locked in a demountable building at night in a room by themselves when there is a glass mirror on the wall and there are other ways for that young person to be able to harm themselves, that causes me great concern.

Mr RYAN: Particularly when it is in the middle of nowhere.

Mrs D'ATH: Yes.

Mr RYAN: Very far away from medical assistance. Attorney, you mentioned that you visited the site. How did you get there?

Mrs D'ATH: I drove out there with one of the departmental staff and one of my staff.

Mr RYAN: No helicopters?

Mrs D'ATH: No helicopters.

Mr RYAN: What would it cost to fly out to the site in a helicopter?

Mrs D'ATH: It cost the former attorney-general in hiring two helicopters to go out there almost \$15,000. \$14,980 was spent getting two helicopters out there. I have heard the response from the opposition on this issue, which is that the former attorney-general was advised to take these helicopters for security reasons and because of the large contingent of security officers he had with him at the time because of the VLAD legislation. I can advise that, of the seven people who caught these two helicopters out to Lincoln Springs, there was only one Queensland Police Service officer. The rest were a ministerial adviser, the Attorney-General himself, two other LNP members, a Townsville community safety committee chairperson and a photographer who shot the promotional video that you can now find on YouTube with the Attorney-General. If that were not bad enough, the Attorney-General did not claim this as ministerial travel. He requested that that bill of almost \$15,000 be paid by youth justice. That is almost \$15,000 that could be put toward youth programs. It could be put toward the community and mentoring phase of these programs that the KPMG found was quite deficient.

Mr RYAN: Attorney, what was the intention behind the advertisement that was filmed? Was it trying to promote the government's policies? Was it highlighting what was happening at Lincoln Springs? It seems a peculiar strategy to employ while you are visiting a youth boot camp?

Mrs D'ATH: I suspect—it is not my place to talk on behalf of the former attorney-general—it was simply promoting the government, trying to make it look like—

Mrs SMITH: I raise a point of order, Mr Chair.

Mr RYAN: Paid for by taxpayers?

CHAIR: What is the point of order?

Mrs SMITH: That is asking for an opinion. Standing order 115—

Mr RYAN: Well, this question is not asking for an opinion. Paid for by taxpayers?

Mrs D'ATH: Definitely paid for by taxpayers.

Mr RYAN: Can I ask the assistant director-general if you have ever visited the Lincoln Springs boot camp?

Mr Harvey: Yes, I have been to the boot camp four times.

Mr RYAN: How did you get there?

Mr Harvey: By vehicle.

Mr RYAN: Thank you. The final question that I have, Attorney, is: do you think it is an appropriate use of taxpayers' funds—youth justice funds—to charter helicopters in this particular instance?

Mrs D'ATH: No, not at all. I think it is appalling. There is no evidence to support the claims of the opposition that this was done as a safety measure or security measure. Even if it was really seen as necessary, the Attorney-General could have taken one helicopter with his security personnel and the remainder of the individuals, including the other LNP members, could have easily got in a vehicle and met the Attorney-General out there. This is an appalling abuse of office and an appalling abuse of taxpayers' funds. It is appalling that it was required to be paid out of the youth justice budget simply because they did not want to sit in a car for a few hours. I cannot see any other reason why the former attorney-general felt the need to hire two helicopters to go out there for the day. It was a nice trip. The scenery was lovely. It was great to go out there. Quite honestly, you do not truly get an appreciation of how remote it is until you do that drive. I managed to do that drive leaving at 6.30 in the morning to get out there, visit the site, meet the youth there, talk to the staff and come back and be on a flight that afternoon without needing a helicopter.

CHAIR: Thank you, Attorney. I will go back to non-government members.

Mr WALKER: Thank you, Mr Chair. We might return to policies looking forward that might help Queensland. Attorney, we were looking at the alcohol fuelled violence issue. We discussed a little the point in your plan which talks about drunken patrons being breathalysed. I think with the best will in the world, Attorney, you would have to admit that there are significant shades of grey and difficulties in interpretation in the way in which you have described point 6 will work out. My question is you is whether or not it would be sensible, given the confusion around this issue alone and the 10-point plan, more broadly, to do what our government did—that is, put out a draft plan in regard to what you are suggesting and let the people of Queensland have feedback on it. It is a sensitive issue. We are talking about the safety of people, but we are also trying to balance that with their rights and not have an intrusion on their rights. They are important issues. Why wouldn't you move towards a plan and then put it out for public consultation and see what people think?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. When we talk about consultation, certainly we were out there consulting in the lead-up to the election and in the development of this policy. This policy was not developed in a vacuum. It was done based on evidence both nationally and internationally on how to tackle alcohol fuelled violence. We will continue the consultation that I have already started. Any legislation that is introduced in the parliament will go through a proper parliamentary committee process as well so that all parties can have the opportunity to put their views forward about how this is implemented. The reason I am consulting is to make sure that we do get the implementation right. We have announced our policy. We need to work through the implementation details with the relevant stakeholders. That is what I am doing. As I have already stated, I am doing that with the Police Service and the Police Union in relation to that particular issue.

Mr WALKER: Are you saying by way of that that other than the normal committee process you do not intend to have full public consultation on your plans?

Mrs D'ATH: We took this to the election and it was the people of Queensland who endorsed our policy.

Mr WALKER: But that is far short of public consultation. You know that the people of Queensland did not specifically look at this when they were voting. That was certainly part of the mix, but that is not the same as public consultation about a significant issue that is going to or could affect people's rights and their safety. Surely people should have a chance to have a say about that.

Mrs D'ATH: I appreciate that the member is concerned about the rights of individuals and how their rights might be impacted by legislation—

Mr WALKER: And safety.

Mrs D'ATH: And I appreciate that comment. The same regard was certainly not shown by the previous government and the same comments can be said in relation to the VLAD legislation. Maybe if the previous government had considered individuals' rights they might have consulted on it. I am

engaging in that consultation. I am doing it in a variety of ways. I will be consulting, and we will make sure that what we bring forward is policy and legislation that will work and that will take on board the views of the community and the key stakeholders. I am not going to sit here and talk about the specific ways that might or might not happen other than to say we will be consulting broadly, as we did in the development of the policy. Let us be clear: our election commitment and policy are based on evidence—evidence which the previous government chose to ignore when it comes to tackling alcohol fuelled violence.

Mr WALKER: I think you will find the Safe Night Out policy was developed with evidence at its base and with significant public consultation. So I challenge you and ask you once again to consider fuller public consultation about this significant issue which affects a lot of people before you simply put it into parliament and trust the committee process to do that job for you. Attorney, I am looking again at alcohol fuelled violence. Has the department or your office covered the travel and accommodation costs for any of the participants who attended the recent industry forum held on 6 August at Parliament House?

Mrs D'ATH: I will ask the director-general to respond to that. I am not aware of any costs that were covered.

Mr Mackie: Thank you for the question. I do not have that information on me so I will take that on notice if that is possible.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. On this same topic again, Attorney, there has been talk about the new Queen's Wharf development being subject to the proposed one o'clock lockout. Can you explain to us how the government will determine whether the bars and restaurants involved with that project will be subject to that 1 am lockout?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I can advise that, in relation to integrated resort developments and casinos, as the member would be aware, they are excluded under the trading hours arrangements in relation to Liquor Licensing. There are particular exceptions—casinos, convention centres and airports—that will continue to operate in relation to our policies. Those exclusions will exist and that will apply to the Queen's Wharf development.

I can also advise the member though that, when we have looked at other examples of how this has operated interstate, what we have found is that the casino operators have voluntarily started to shift their trading hours to be reflective of the broader trading hours in the area to actually overcome any problems they are having in relation to alcohol fuelled violence. The casinos of course are still operating 24 hours a day, but the other licensed venues that are part of that complex are voluntarily choosing to wind back their trading hours in recognition that if they do not they tend to see a bit of a flow over of problems into their own area.

Mr WALKER: Have you consulted or will you consult with licence holders in the CBD outside the casino area about the potential for conflict and how that is to be managed?

Mrs D'ATH: Yes, that consultation is ongoing and I will certainly be undertaking those discussions.

Mr WALKER: I now refer to page 5 of the SDS and your proposal to reintroduce diversionary courts. There is a \$1.5 million allocation in 2015-16 out of a four-year commitment to re-establish the Murri Court, the special circumstances program and the drug diversion model. What will the \$1.5 million for this financial year actually involve? What will it achieve?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. The government has committed and took to the election the reintroduction of these diversionary courts because we know that they are certainly an important part of the overall approach to the justice system in directing people away from corrective services and into early intervention and prevention programs to reduce reoffending. So we have committed to bring back the Murri Court, the special circumstances diversion program and the drugs court as part of that process. I will just check whether the director-general has the particular breakdown of those figures.

Mr Mackie: Thank you for the question. It is \$8.7 million over four years. The next year is the \$1.5 million; it is part of that. In relation to the actual breakdown of where that is going, again, I will need to take that on notice if that is okay.

Mr WALKER: Thank you.

Mrs D'ATH: Obviously, the amount allocated in the 2015-16 budget is lower than future years simply because we are in that implementation phase. Work is being done at the moment in developing the model of the program, and then in doing that working out what staffing allocation will be needed

and the funding going forward. The reason we are doing that is we are not simply just picking up what was there before and reintroducing it. We want to make sure that we look at lessons learnt in the past—what worked, what did not work—to make sure that going forward we have the best possible model that reflects the needs of the current time and also that the model is able to adapt over time to the changing demands and needs of the community and the justice system.

We are taking our time currently in working up those models. I have had a number of different ideas put to me about what they might look like—whether it should be one single body with that rehabilitation court and then the various arms underneath, whether they are stand-alone, how it will actually work. I certainly welcome the varying views that we have had from the sector about what we can do to best achieve that support for those people going through the justice system.

As I say, once we have finished that consultation about what the final model should look like, then we can clearly identify the staffing arrangements and everything that will be needed going forward. The funding model is based around estimates of course around how the programs have worked in the past, the staffing numbers that are needed based on the information the department already has and what the department knows about the systems that have been operating previously.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, you talk about different views as to the models of these courts but there are of course different views as to whether they work at all. As you know, our view was that they did not. What research have you done, or what evidence are you moving forward on on the basis that a return to any model at all is actually going to make a difference?

Mrs D'ATH: It is based on quite a substantial amount of evidence about early intervention and prevention programs in the justice system—that if you divert people away and start looking at the underlying causes of their issues and what is causing the offences, you have got much more chance of actually stopping these people reoffending. When it comes to the Murri Court, it is about making sure you have got the elders there, you are bringing the Indigenous community with you in supporting people who are going through the justice system and you are finding ways culturally to engage with this cohort that is seriously overrepresented in the justice system, in our courts, in youth detention and in the corrective services. We need to be doing more.

The Indigenous Sentencing List that took its place evolved out of necessity because the department and the stakeholders knew that something still needed to be there. But the fact is that all of the programs that took the place of the previous diversionary courts were underfunded and were not to the scale that these previous programs were. I am certainly mindful that when we reintroduce these programs we have a proper evaluation process where we can collect data along the way so that the public, the stakeholders and the judiciary can clearly see what the outcomes are. In that way, if there is a particular model that is not working, you can identify that and adapt it and make sure you are meeting the needs of the community and the justice system. The problem is that I want to put in place a process whereby future governments—no matter what political persuasion—can look at that evidence and say, 'These work and we're going to keep them,' as opposed to just scrapping them to save some money without necessarily having the evidence that they do not result in positive outcomes.

Mr WALKER: I want to respond that it was not a matter of scrapping them to save money; there was a view that they did not work and we obviously differ on that.

Mrs D'ATH: We do.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, I refer to page 12 of the SDS in relation to legal and prosecutions. Can you advise the committee how many criminal appeals have been lodged by you since your appointment as Attorney-General? How many of those appeals have been successful? What has been the total cost of those appeals?

Mrs D'ATH: I will need to take that question on notice and get that information back to the committee as soon as possible.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, I now go to page 6 of the SDS in relation to the additional million dollars being provided to the Environmental Defenders Office. What commitment was given to the EDO prior to the last election in terms of funding and why was that made? Why was this organisation singled out for specialist funding separate to other community legal centres?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. There was an election commitment leading up to the 2015 election that if re-elected a Labor government would reinstate the right of the Environmental Defenders Office to be on the list for community legal centre organisations. Why were they singled out? Because they were singled out by the previous government which explicitly removed them from that list so they could not get any funding. What we sought to do was reinstate some equity in ensuring they

were not the one organisation that was left off the list in having the right to access that funding and having funding allocated. I should say that being put back on that list and receiving funding—which is funding that very much is equivalent to the type of funding that community legal centres get—means they have to meet exactly the same requirements, guidelines and outcomes as every other community legal centre does out of the funding program.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, I refer to page 13 of the SDS which relates to sentencing as a last resort. What evidence do you have to support the reintroduction of this sentencing principle into the act?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. The reintroduction of detention as a last resort—and this goes to youth justice as well—is an important commitment that we made to the people of Queensland. As the member would be aware, the previous government in 2014 amended the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to completely oust the application of this sentencing principle, both under statute and at common law. The legislative change means that Queensland is now the only jurisdiction across Australia that does not apply this principle—I repeat: the only jurisdiction across Australia that does not have this principle in place.

The government will introduce the amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act to return the sentencing position in Queensland for offenders aged 17 years and over to that which existed immediately before 2014. That is, once again in Queensland, imprisonment is to be regarded as a sentence of last resort, and a penalty that allows the person to remain in the community is preferable for all offenders other than if convicted of violence, child sexual abuse or offences involving child exploitation material. For offenders convicted of violence, child sexual abuse or offences involving child exploitation material, even before the 2014 changes, the sentencing principle had been displaced in Queensland in recognition of the serious nature of that offending and the need for community protection.

For all other offenders, the amendments will mean that sentencing courts again have the necessary discretion to structure the most appropriate penalty in the circumstances of each case—and a penalty that not only meets the community expectation but, where appropriate, facilitates rehabilitation which is in the interests of the community as a whole. This fundamental principle will also be re-established for offenders aged under 17 as part of this government's commitment to delivering a comprehensive package of reforms to Queensland's youth justice framework.

We do this to bring us back in line with the rest of the country, which I think is important. It is to actually give our courts the discretion they need to decide whether a person should be sentenced to detention or whether they are better off having other forms of sentencing. We believe that it is important to recognise the separation of powers and the rights and the important role of the courts in determining the sentencing based on the information before the court—and not have the government of the day dictating what that policy should be of the courts.

As I say, I think it is a good model and a preferred model to be in line with the other jurisdictions in relation to this. Can I say that it also leads into our other election commitment, which is the Sentencing Advisory Council and bringing that back as well so that we can have a broader consideration of sentencing and make sure that the public has confidence in the sentencing that is being handed down by our courts and also that the judiciary and the legal profession has guidance in relation to that sentencing. These sorts of principles go hand in hand with those election commitments we took to the people of Queensland.

CHAIR: Thank you, Attorney. I will now go to the member for Ipswich West.

Mr MADDEN: Attorney-General, I have a question that is very important to many Queenslanders. Could you outline how the government is delivering on its election commitment on civil partnerships and the impact, if any, on the budget?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. We again took to the election a commitment to reinstate the provisions under the civil partnership legislation that the previous government changed. The former LNP government—in an act that I believe can only be described as an attack on the LGBTI community of Queensland—removed civil unions, taking away from Queensland's gay and lesbian community the option of a state sanctioned declaration ceremony. The former LNP government also changed the language applying to these unions to 'registered relationships', a move which the government knows is an insult to Queensland's LGBTI community. The member for Kawana, the former attorney-general, watered down the Queensland civil partnership legislation to remove any provisions which may have been, in his words, 'perceived to mimic marriage'. They actively sought to distinguish civil unions from marriage, taking away the rights of the gay and lesbian community to have and share a special ceremony with their friends and family to celebrate the love between two people. At a time

when same-sex marriage is now front and centre in the nation's political conscience, it is important we ensure that we give our LGBTI community back the right to take part in ceremonies sanctioned by the state of Queensland.

We acknowledge that each and every Queenslanders should be afforded the opportunity to formally declare their love and commitment. This is why our government is taking action to change the Relationships Act to restore the civil partnerships and to restore state sanctioned civil partnership ceremonies to provide couples of any gender with the opportunity to participate in an official civil ceremony with their families and friends prior to having their relationship registered under the Relationships Act.

The proposed amendments will closely reflect the requirements for civil partnership ceremonies that were in the Civil Partnerships Act and will change the name of the Relationships Act back to the Civil Partnerships Act. We are aware that there are strongly held and differing views on the proposed changes. Our government is committed to an open consultation process to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders are aware of the nature of the proposed amendments. We have recently commenced this consultation with stakeholders. Over the coming months I look forward to engaging in discussions about these proposed amendments. I have been in discussions with various groups from the moment that I got into office to discuss and to outline what it is we are seeking to do.

You have to remember that, under the previous government, the relationship could still be registered. It could be put on the register of births, deaths and marriages, but they could not hold a ceremony. It baffles me why you would go to the extent of introducing legislation in this parliament to allow the relationship to be registered but prohibit under legislation the public display of affection through a ceremony with family and friends. It was not that it was silent; they actively went in to remove that right from the legislation. I have to say I cannot think of it being anything but petty to actually stop people from having that right to have that civil ceremony.

There are a number of changes that will go along with that in relation to how the relationship is terminated. Importantly, can I say that one of the issues raised by some of the stakeholders is the right to refuse to conduct a ceremony. The celebrant who would conduct such a ceremony would need to register to be a civil partnership celebrant or notary. Those who are marriage celebrants right now would not be required to undertake a civil partnership ceremony. They would have to actively choose to register as a civil partnership celebrant to then be required to undertake one of those ceremonies. It is a right, it is a choice, of marriage celebrants to undertake that path. We have made that very clear in the development of our proposals. That is out for discussion right now. I hope to introduce legislation in this parliament before the end of the year.

Mr MADDEN: Attorney-General, I also have a question about the Auscript service. Could you inform the committee about the changes to the court recording and transcription services?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. In March 2013 the former government outsourced the reporting and transcription of Queensland courts and tribunals to Auscript Pty Ltd. This was done, unfortunately, in another rushed measure with little thought as to how it should occur. I am finding too many examples of that in my portfolio, can I say, of when the former Attorney-General and former government rushed through significant decisions costing millions of dollars, shutting down the previous services that had been provided. In doing so there was no trial undertaken, there was no pilot, there was no duplication of systems to ensure that there were not any flaws or problems. This is the recording in our courtrooms of matters and yet there was no trial, just end and start the new process, leaving a vacuum. There were really no other players. It is certainly a difficult situation.

What is most concerning is the cost to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. When the government made this decision they praised their decision on the basis that they said this would save \$6 million a year. However, because the decision was rushed, because they did not take the proper advice of the department in drafting the contract, in taking time to look at all of the elements of the transcription services and how they are delivered, what costs are incurred and what revenue is received, they failed to factor in the costs of providing these transcripts to the judiciary itself. They failed to take into account the \$1 million of revenue they get each year from selling the transcripts. None of that was taken into account. What does that mean? As a consequence of the rushed decision of the previous government and the former Attorney-General in issuing this contract, there was not \$6 million in savings realised; it was less than \$2 million. An amount of \$4 million has now had to be found within the existing department budget. So \$6 million was taken out of their budget from 2014-15 and into the forward years because there was supposed to be this big saving. The savings have been around \$2 million. An amount of \$4 million is now having to be found elsewhere in the budget.

What does that mean? That \$4 million is being funded predominantly through the court maintenance budget. So if any members of parliament have a concern that their courts are not being refurbished or redeveloped to the extent that they should be, they should complain to the opposition members about the decision they made on this contract because that is \$4 million that could be going to provide more IT, making sure our courts have disability access and proper rooms for victims, making sure we have the IT equipment so that we can reduce the cost of transferring prisoners, legal professionals and everyone else and have matters heard quicker through the courts. This is another appalling example of the way that the previous Attorney-General and the previous government operated. I think that the maladministration of that government in the money that has been wasted because of the lack of oversight—not the lack of oversight, but the absolute interference by the former Attorney-General in the department being able to do its job and how projects were awarded and the rushed process they went through.

Mr MADDEN: Attorney-General, I took great joy in celebrating NAIDOC Week this year. I have some questions I would like to ask you about that. Can you outline what events were held in the courts and the DJAG building to celebrate NAIDOC Week? Could you contrast that with what events were held last year? Are they covered in the financial expenses of 2014-15?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. In relation to whether there were any expenses in relation to NAIDOC Week in the past budget, I would not think there would have been any expenses over the last three years because the previous Attorney-General did not want to participate in such events. The great event that we had this year, which was the flag-raising ceremony outside the courts on the lawns with a number of representatives including acting Chief Justice Fraser at the time, deputy Chief Magistrate Leanne O'Shea, members of the legal profession and other senior members of the judiciary, importantly, Murri Court elders including Uncle Joe Kirk—and I want to make a special mention of him. He issued a very warm welcome to country including providing the message sticks so that we had the right to speak on traditional lands for that ceremony. It was a wonderful event and one that was welcomed broadly by the legal profession and the judiciary.

The master of ceremonies, Justin Power, Indigenous justice officer with the Courts Innovation Program, also showed us the depth of talent we have in the department in the way he oversaw that event. In addition to that wonderful event that had not been held for the last three years, we also had a youth justice art exhibition. This was on display for I think a couple of weeks on the ground floor in the foyer of the State Law Building. This was the artwork done by Indigenous youth at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre working with a wonderful Indigenous artist in expressing themselves. I have to say this work was really impressive that was done by kids as young as 12 years old. After the exhibition, that artwork went back to the detention centre. I understand it was displayed in public areas so families and friends who visited could also see that artwork. In addition, only about a week and a half to two weeks ago when I visited the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre, they were having their NAIDOC Week celebrations. They were holding their celebration outside of NAIDOC Week because it meant that more people from various Indigenous community organisations would be available to attend. They were having their own footy competition for the day and engaging in an inclusive approach to the NAIDOC celebrations and having the staff, legal professionals and community organisations coming in and playing footy with the youth at the detention centre. The Deadly Choices representatives were there as well.

People might look at these sorts of examples and say, 'This is an example of being soft on crime.' The fact is we have to rehabilitate these kids. We have to stop them re-offending. We have to engage on Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander issues and we have to engage, especially in the justice space. In NAIDOC Week, we have to engage and we should engage and we should want to engage with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander neighbours because of their overrepresentation in the justice system in our detention centres and youth detention centres. To exclude them at a time when we have so many youth who are Indigenous in our detention centres—and, quite honestly, the KPMG report shows that, particularly with the remoteness of the Lincoln Springs, there was no connection, no communication and no engagement with the elders and broader Indigenous community for those youth. That is really disappointing because we need to start reversing the trend of these numbers. The only way to do that is to work hand-in-hand with our Indigenous community. Murri Courts is one way. Celebrating NAIDOC Week is another way. There is a range of measures that we need to undertake as well as multifaceted approaches across multiple agencies, including with the Department of Communities, including with Police and including with the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships in this important area.

CHAIR: I might ask one question relevant to your response to Mr Madden in regards to civil partnerships and in particular what the government's commitment is in respect of creating a fair and just society for LGBTI issues.

Mrs D'ATH: Sorry, the question itself?

CHAIR: The question was: what is the government doing in the delivery of commitments to creating a fair and just society for LGBTI issues?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I have already talked about the civil partnerships, and that is certainly one element that we have already started the work on. The government went to the election with a raft of election commitments based on strongly held principles of social justice and equality before the law and in seeking to address the wrongs and inequalities which have been suffered by members of the LGBTI community across the state. Three key commitments were made in addition to the commitment to reinstate civil partnerships. I can advise the chair and the members of the committee in brief that they related to addressing the gay panic defence, considering making age of consent more or less uniform and considering the expunging of historical gay sex convictions.

In relation to the gay panic defence, just prior to the change of government in 2012 the then Labor government had announced its intention to act on recommendations of an expert panel which had considered the so-called gay panic defence or the issue of non-violent sexual advances being used to establish the partial defence of provocation in the case of murder. The committee recommended an amendment to section 304 of the Criminal Code to specifically exclude non-violent sexual advances from the ambit of the defence other than in exceptional circumstances. It was intended to remove any doubt as to the operation of the defence. This issue was not progressed by the previous LNP government during their three years in power. This government is committed to introducing the changes as recommended by the committee.

On the issue of age of consent, under Queensland's Criminal Code the age of consent for most sexual activity is 16 with the exception of anal intercourse, which is 18. The government is aware of the concerns of the LGBTI community in relation to this discrepancy and in particular their claim that it is discriminatory and a barrier to young people accessing safe sex information. At the same time the government recognises that there are strong conflicting views held by Queenslanders about this issue; accordingly, we have committed to establishing an expert committee, including health experts, to consider the implications of making the age of consent laws consistent in Queensland.

On the issue of expunging historical gay sex convictions, this government recognises that there are a growing number of Australian jurisdictions considering the question of whether historical convictions for consensual sexual activity between males should be expunged from a person's criminal record. Prior to the election we made it clear that we supported consideration of the issue of expunging historical criminal convictions for gay sex. However, the legal position is not straightforward on this matter, as historically the same offence provision applied whether or not the act was consensual and between two adults or whether a child was involved. In order for this issue to be properly considered and for potential approaches to be explored, this government intends to refer this question to the Queensland Law Reform Commission for its consideration.

CHAIR: I will now hand over to non-government members. I call Mr Walker.

Mr WALKER: I might take up a number of the issues that the Attorney mentioned in the last series of questions. I think the Attorney would be aware that the opposition's position with respect to two of those matters, the abolition of the gay panic defence and the expunging of records of homosexual activity in a consenting and otherwise non-threatening environment, if I can put it that way, are supported by the opposition. We would be pleased to see what the government produces in that regard. We do realise that, with both of those issues, it is not simply a matter of saying that: we do need to look at the detail. But the opposition is certainly minded to support any moves the government makes in respect of that.

We have been pretty patient with the Attorney's interpretation and sometimes reinterpretation of history during the term of the LNP government, but I particularly need to pick her up on her chiding of us for—'prohibiting' was the word she used—ceremonies under the Civil Partnerships Act. I would like to ask the Attorney where in the act there is a provision that prohibits people having ceremonies to acknowledge the relationship that they have that is registered under that act.

Mrs D'ATH: My reference to 'prohibiting' is that it was an explicit decision and act by the former government to remove those civil ceremonies from being ceremonies that are conducted under the legislation. Can someone now have a ceremony that is not recognised at law or is not recognised under

the legislation? Of course they can. Anyone can. Two individuals can stand in a back yard and say, 'We're married.' That does not make them married. They have to comply with the law and it has to be recognised. In saying that, I am clearly pointing out that this was a deliberate act of the previous government to remove civil partnership ceremonies as a ceremony recognised at law.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, would you concede that it is possible now for people who are in a civil partnership to have a ceremony in a church if a church is prepared to do that, or with their friends around them, and to have that registered under the act and that that will be a completely legal registered relationship?

Mrs D'ATH: Yes, it would be.

Mr WALKER: Attorney, in the first section we were discussing some matters with the CCC, and I just wanted to finish up on some things in relation to the CCC. Can I ask whether you have visited the CCC since being appointed, and have you been briefed on the work being undertaken in relation to criminal motorcycle gang investigations and other organised crime related investigations?

Mrs D'ATH: I have not visited the CCC. I have had meetings with the CCC. I will not go into details of any particular briefings, but I have had conversations with the CCC.

Mr WALKER: Given that the question of funding for the CCC and its fight against organised crime is an important public issue, did you take a proposal for additional funding of the CCC to cabinet?

Mrs D'ATH: As there is already funding provided in this year and the forward estimates, as it had been in the previous budget, I had not sought additional funding and the CCC had not asked for additional funding, either under the former acting chair of the CCC or the current acting chair. I had not had a request and, as you would appreciate, when it comes to these bodies and statutory authorities and preparing budget papers, you very much take the advice of those bodies as to whether they are seeking additional funds in that area. Such a request was not made.

Mr WALKER: I accept that a request may not have been made, but have you made any independent assessment yourself as to whether you believe additional funding may be necessary?

Mrs D'ATH: No. When it comes to additional funding, I will be looking at the recommendations that come out of the Commission of Inquiry into organised crime and also what comes out of the taskforce review in considering what sort of resources are needed going forward and what funding might need to be allocated. If needs be, then I will go through the appropriate processes of seeking funding to provide for that. But I really do think we need that as a government we need to look at the outcomes of the Commission of Inquiry into organised crime particularly to identify what sort of additional policy legislative changes and resourcing might be needed to fight organised crime in Queensland.

Mr WALKER: I refer to page 64 of the SDS which relates to domestic violence and child protection duty lawyer services and ask whether you or perhaps someone from the department can outline the history of these services and, with reference to Southport, Cairns and Townsville, the uptake of those services in 2014-15. I understand it is a pretty detailed question.

Mrs D'ATH: How far do we want to go back? We are talking about the 2015-16 budget and going forward, so I am not quite sure. Obviously we can make reference to the 2014-15 budget.

Mr WALKER: I am looking at the recent history of the services and the uptake in 2014-15. Perhaps the Director-General can assist.

Mr Mackie: I am sorry, can you restate the exact question?

Mr WALKER: I am looking at domestic violence and child protection duty lawyer services, and I am looking at the history of those services as they are provided in Southport, Cairns and Townsville. I am just interested in the utilisation and uptake of those services in 2014-15. I understand it is a pretty specific question.

Mr Mackie: That is a very specific question. I would need to take that on notice, and I think Legal Aid would also be party to providing an answer to that.

Mr WALKER: Yes, thank you.

Mrs D'ATH: Just to clarify. As I understand it, the Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer Service was not being directly funded. I believe that there were some DV duty lawyer services operating, but they were being operated by community legal centres and, as I understand it, other not-for-profit organisations.

Mr WALKER: It is probably best to wait to get the detailed response, as the Director-General suggested. I would ask a question of the Director-General, and I will refer to page 32 of the SDS in relation to births, deaths and marriages. Director-General, can you advise of the uptake of commemorative certificates that have been launched since 2010 and whether or not any other such certificates are being considered?

Mr Mackie: Thank you for the question. From the time that you are talking about under the former government there were a number of commemorative certificates issued. People may remember some of these. The Prince George commemorative certificate was free to babies born in the same year as the future heir, and there were about 8,326 of those certificates issued. The former government launched a Maroons certificate in July 2014. There was also an Anzac commemorative certificate of which there were two designs: birth and death.

Since that time under this current government we have continued to refresh and redesign some of these certificates. We have also removed some of the details to mitigate any identity fraud risks with some of them. There have been five new certificate designs released: a Queensland emblems range in teddy, Cooktown orchid, clownfish, ballooning and bubbles—

Mr WALKER: Sorry, Director-General, what was the last one?

Mr Mackie: Bubbles.

Mr WALKER: Is that associated with ballooning, or separate?

Mr Mackie: I think it is just bubbles. We have workshopped a lot of those with Queensland mothers and they were launched in June 2015. We have also had a new Maroons certificate, and that was released to celebrate the 2015 State of Origin win this year. That was the runner-up from the competition we had run in previous years, and it was launched in August this year. I believe at this point we have sold 18.

Mr WALKER: Eighteen of the Maroon ones?

Mrs D'ATH: I understand also there was a centenary one. Maybe it is not called commemorative because it is not on the Director-General's list, but there a commemorative one in relation to the centenary of World War I. I have to thank the Department of Births, Deaths and Marriages for the great work that they did around that. I am not sure of the uptake of it, but I hope many individuals took the opportunity to get that commemorative certificate.

Mr WALKER: Thank you. Attorney, if I can please go back to you. If I could refer to page 5 of the budget measures document—that is Budget Paper No. 4—and the reprioritisation allocations that are set out there. If I can just ask you whether you can outline what will be impacted by the reprioritisation allocation of \$38.3 million for DJAG across the forward estimates?

Mrs D'ATH: We will take a moment to get the relevant paper.

Mr WALKER: It is page 5 of the budget document. The column I am looking at is in table 1.2. I am at the line relating to Justice and Attorney-General and the total reprioritisation allocation of \$38.3 million shown in brackets in the final column.

Mrs D'ATH: I will limit my comments in relation to my area of responsibility, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, so obviously this will exclude Queensland Corrective Services. My department no longer has responsibility for the office of Fair Work and Office of Workplace Health and Safety.

In relation to my responsibilities, the department reprioritisation is \$19.764 million over four years to 2018-19 through improvement procurement and contract management practices, efficiencies gained from continual business improvement strategies, including electronic forms and video conferencing, close management of legal advertising and office expenses and also harvesting savings from funded vacant nonfront-line positions. Specific examples of savings include: cost reductions in the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre reception services and procedures resulting in annual savings of \$400,000; implementation of online customer licensing systems for liquor and gaming resulting in annual savings of \$400,000; introduction of electronic general purpose expenditure vouchers resulting in lower shared service costs of \$500,000; and better work practices and forms used for shared services and improved audit outcomes resulting in annual cost savings of \$800,000. As you can see, a number of efficiencies have been gained by online processes.

You may be aware that we also introduced the legal services panel, which I hope will make savings in the future. We now have an agreement with law firms to provide their services at a set fee, so we now know and control the costs incurred for any external legal service by every law firm that has

been successful in signing up to that panel. That panel relates to the whole of government, so we hope that in the long term we would see savings across government in that area by the use of this new panel system.

Mr WALKER: The figure you used was \$19.7 million relating to your department?

Mrs D'ATH: \$19.764 million over four years for my areas of responsibility within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

Mr WALKER: Can I have one or two final ones?

CHAIR: One last question.

Mr WALKER: Thanks, Mr Chair. I am just interested, Attorney, in Mr Byrne's inquiry into organised crime, which I think is due to report in October.

Mrs D'ATH: That is right.

Mr WALKER: If you could just update us on what has actually happened under that inquiry. Have there been or are there to be public hearings? How is that inquiry progressing its work? It has been very much under the radar and I expect that some of its inquiry has to be, but I would have thought and expected there would have been some public hearing elements to Mr Byrne's work and I am just interested to get a report on that please.

Mrs D'ATH: I am not aware of any scheduled public hearings, but I certainly can take that on notice for the member. You are right: there is a fair bit of sensitivity around some of the evidence that will be brought before the commission of inquiry and we have made sure that those protections are there for the chair, being Michael Byrne QC. The commission has met with key stakeholders in its first few weeks of commencing and has, as I understand, extended written invitations to a range of individuals and organisations seeking submissions and information. The nature and subject of the matter of the inquiry has not readily lent itself to public hearings at this stage. The majority of the submissions and information provided to the commission has been accompanied by requests for confidentiality. The commission has relied on its powers under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950 to seek information and documents from organisations and individuals with particular knowledge and more than 100 requests have been made for written information or the provision of documents and a number of requests for attendance to be interviewed have been issued. Nine individuals have been summonsed for attendance, resulting in six days of in-camera hearings so far. As you have stated, the commission is due to report back to the government on 30 October this year. In relation to future public hearings, that is really a matter for the commission to determine based on the sensitivities of the matters before the commission. So that is the update I have at this stage on how that inquiry is progressing.

CHAIR: Thank you, Attorney.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Chair, I can advise that I have some answers back, if I could provide them very quickly. We can submit them.

CHAIR: If you like.

Mrs D'ATH: This is a question that was taken on notice on behalf of the Electoral Commissioner in relation to this question: can you please confirm why the letters of the returning officers regarding dinner and trivia night were on the disclosure log on the Electoral Commission Queensland website? I can table those answers if it will assist in speeding the process up.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr Mackie: The other question that I took on notice from the member for Mansfield was in relation to the organised crime taskforce. The question was: of the \$597,000 budget that is allocated to the taskforce on organisational crime, what portion is attributed to remuneration for the members of the taskforce? The total, as you know, is \$597,000. Only the chair will be remunerated for the taskforce. There is a budget there of \$250,000. The remaining budgets are against expert expenses for witnesses' advice and two staff members as part of the secretariat which is \$247,000.

Mr WALKER: Thank you.

Mrs D'ATH: I also want to clarify one of my responses in relation to a question from the member for Mansfield in relation to Queens Wharf. I should say that those processes are still ongoing, so the finalisation of the deeds of agreement and the legislation that must be introduced in relation to an integrated resort development are still progressing. So any decision as far as the finalisation of how much of that site actually gets caught up in relation to the exemptions and trading hours changes are

still to be worked through. My advice at that stage is simply on the normal exemptions that apply and what is likely to occur in relation to Queens Wharf, but I do not want to pre-empt what the final discussions and negotiations are around that.

In finishing before I lose all my Department of Justice and Attorney-General staff, I want to thank all of the staff who have been involved in estimates. It really is, as I described to my children this morning, like preparing for an exam and it does take a lot of work and a lot of people behind the scenes who have put together information so that we could provide accurate and full answers to committee members today. Any questions that we have taken on notice we would seek to get back as quickly as possible. This is my first public opportunity in the six months that I have been the Attorney-General to thank the Department of Justice and Attorney-General staff across the state, especially those in the regions, in youth justice, in the courts and in all of the divisions such as Liquor and Gaming, Fair Trade and all of those areas. I thank them for the incredible work that they do every day in serving the department and serving the community and the people of Queensland.

CHAIR: Thank you, Attorney. The committee joins you in that acknowledgement as well. That brings us to the conclusion of having a lunch break. The committee will resume at approximately 1.20 to look at the proposed expenditure for Training and Skills. Thank you.

Proceedings suspended from 12.50 pm to 1.25 pm

 **CHAIR:** The estimates hearing for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is now resumed. We will now consider expenditure in the portfolio of the Minister for Training and Skills. Attorney, we welcome you to make an opening statement.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Chair and committee members. I take this opportunity to address the committee on the investment this government is making to deliver better outcomes within the training and skills sector. Training and skills is a real passion of mine and I want to thank the Department of Education and Training and the providers who have worked with me since I was given the opportunity to represent this portfolio as minister. Creating jobs for Queenslanders now and well into the future is this government's prime focus. I am delighted that \$1.08 billion will bolster the Training and Skills component of the Department of Education and Training's budget in 2015-16. Our commitment is to offer all Queenslanders access to skilled training no matter where they live. We will invest \$60 million this year as part of the \$240 million commitment over the next four years to reinstate the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, the successful program that was scrapped by the previous LNP government. This cost-effective program will support up to 32,000 Queenslanders back into work.

As part of the \$34.5 million to be spent on our Rescuing TAFE commitment over three years, we will invest \$6.63 million to restore TAFE Queensland's status as our state's premier public provider of training. We have allocated \$40 million over four years to establish Jobs Queensland, an independent statutory entity providing industry advice to government on skills demand and long-term workforce planning. Last month the government abolished the LNP's Queensland Training Assets Management Authority and returned control of the state's training assets to the Department of Education and Training. We are conducting a comprehensive audit of the state's training assets and developing a 10-year strategic plan to bring stability and purpose back to the state's TAFE network.

We have already started the process of reinstating an independent training ombudsman by hosting a round table attended by stakeholders from across the sector. The training ombudsman, whose office was abolished by the previous LNP government in 2012, will offer an independent review role for the provision of VET in Queensland, assisting VET consumers such as students, apprentices, trainees and employers, and will receive complaints. We have invested \$745.6 million into vocational education and training this financial year—a 22 per cent increase of \$139 million on the LNP's budget last year—through the VET investment plan for 2015-16. This will target key areas across-the-board, from giving school leavers basic literacy and numeracy skills and to help mature workers to retrain for the new jobs emerging in their region. This training is a first step on the career path for thousands of young people. It will give disadvantaged Queenslanders the skills boost to get back on track and make a positive commitment to their communities. That is why we are committed to ensuring apprentices and trainees make up 10 per cent of the workforce on large government projects. Projects in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must commit to making up 10 per cent of its total labour hours by employing Indigenous workers. I am very proud of the work that our department is already doing in the training space and the work that we are committed to doing to deliver on our election commitments over the next three years and I look forward to receiving questions from the committee in relation to my portfolio of Training and Skills.

CHAIR: Thank you, Attorney. We will now go to questions from the member for Everton.

Mr MANDER: Good afternoon, Minister. Minister, you have already mentioned that one of your signature policies is Jobs Queensland where you are investing \$40 million. Can you tell me what Jobs Queensland has achieved to date please?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. The funding was allocated in the 2015-16 budget and in forward estimates to fund the establishment of Jobs Queensland. Jobs Queensland will take over the previous role done by the Ministerial Industry Council, which, as you would be aware, the previous government established and was chaired by the assistant minister at the time. The purpose of Jobs Queensland is to ensure that we have an independent entity to give industry its voice back on skills development in Queensland. This is all part of our Working Queensland broader policy and it is underpinned by a focus of increasing the productivity of the labour force through workforce planning, fostering emerging and innovative industries and carefully investing in skills development to enhance people's readiness for skilled work and consequently their employment prospects. There is \$10 million per annum over the next four years that we have allocated for the establishment and the operation of the new entity. This entity will be focused on long-term workforce planning and engagement with a broad range of industries centred on identifying the skills and development needs of industry sectors across Queensland. With regard to the reason we are establishing this and believe why it is important that it be independent, certainly as minister I can make direction to the body but I cannot influence the work of the body and I cannot influence the decisions that they make.

We believe that, when it comes to workforce planning, looking at the jobs needs now and into the future what are the skills needs and how do we match training to that and, importantly, how does government match the dollars to those training needs, industry has to have confidence in that planning work and, in doing so, should have direct input and have independence in doing that. We believe that we can keep the costs down when we start operating the body by ensuring that it is sharing some resources in relation to the secretarial functions with the Department of Education and Training so that the funding that is allocated to this body can go directly into the research, the consultation and communication with the broader industries that need to be engaged with to get the best work out of this body.

As to where it is at now, I am currently working through with the department a list of representatives who will form an interim Jobs Queensland body. Jobs Queensland will need to be established under a statute and we are working on the development of that legislation to be introduced into parliament. But we do not want to wait until that legislation is introduced and passed before we start the important work. That is why we have already started to put together an interim reference body that will start the work of Jobs Queensland while we undertake a broader process to appoint the permanent members of that Jobs Queensland body going forward.

Mr MANDER: Minister, what will be the salary of the head of Jobs Queensland? What will the remuneration package be?

Mrs D'ATH: I will just ask the Deputy Director-General to respond.

Ms Wauchope: Thank you for the question. At this stage, the salary determination for the chief executive has not been determined nor the salary for the chairman.

Mr MANDER: Sorry, what was the last part?

Ms Wauchope: Nor the salary for the chair.

Mr MANDER: Thank you. Minister, could you please give me a general breakdown of what the \$10 million of expenditure per year will cover and how that will be broken up?

Mrs D'ATH: I will take that question on notice and get that information for the member.

Mr MANDER: Thank you. Minister, you have mentioned that Jobs Queensland is replacing the former successful Ministerial Industry Commission, but it is doing it at three times the cost. How do you justify the expenditure of \$10 million, replacing a body that basically did exactly the same thing at a third of cost?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. Firstly, I disagree with the statement being made by the member that it is doing exactly the same job at an increased cost. It will not be doing the same job. It will have additional functions, which includes workforce planning, which the previous Ministerial Industry Commission did not do. Also, we believe that it needs to be a body that is more independent from government so that all stakeholders and industry can have confidence in the work that is done in relation to workforce planning and into identifying the training needs going forward. That is something

that was lacking in the previous body. There was not independence. In fact, it was chaired by an assistant minister of the government. So you could in no way claim that the body was able to make its own decisions without government influence in doing so.

We believe that it is important—and some of that cost comes into that by having a separate independent statutory entity—but that comes at a greater cost. But, as I have said, some of those costs will also go to the very important work that this body will do in research and broader consultation with industry bodies. You cannot have every industry represented on a training body. It is not possible. What you need to do is make sure that they have the resources so that they can go out and consult with all the different bodies.

The problem with the previous government in its approach is that it narrowed itself when it comes to training and skills to the four pillars and the traditional trades and it did not look at those broader issues. You have to look at tourism for jobs. You have to look at the agriculture sector. You have to look at construction. You have to look at manufacturing, but you have to look at manufacturing in the new sense of manufacturing. When you look at renewables and energy efficiency, there is a whole range of new jobs that will be developed in the manufacturing sector going forward and not just looking backwards in the traditional manufacturing trades. You have to look at retail. You have to look at hospitality. You have to look at aged care and health.

Importantly, you need to look at disabilities. We have to double the size of the workforce in disabilities with the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme over the next five years and there has been no planning whatsoever in this space and no additional funding put into this space to ensure that we have the workforce that we need going forward for this very important and, should I say, landmark and historic reforms that are going to be implemented across this state and across the country from next year.

Mr MANDER: Minister, I refute that inference about the independence of the Ministerial Industry Commission and the range of stakeholders that they consulted with. They consulted over 200 stakeholders. It is very interesting that some of those sectors that you mentioned, they were exactly the sectors that they did consult with—the retail trade, transport and logistics, tourism, hospital, construction and property services, manufacturing and so on and so forth. This was a very effective group that produced the *Annual skills priority report*. They managed to do that at a third of cost that you are now going to invest in this area. I would suggest, Minister, that this is another level of bureaucracy that will be a total waste of money going down the drain and I—

CHAIR: Member for Everton, now is not a time to debate this matter. I was wondering whether you have any questions further in respect of this area of the portfolio.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I do. Minister, could you please tell me what area of expertise will the head of Jobs Queensland require?

Mrs D'ATH: We are working through that now. As I said, we are looking at the range of expertise that we believe is needed for a body like this to ensure that we have a balance in that representation. Clearly, whoever ends up chairing Jobs Queensland is someone who we hope brings with them a raft of experience in industry or business, in being involved in bodies, chairing skills—all of those sorts of things—to ensure that we have the best person for the job. So I can assure the member that we will go through a proper process in making sure that we have strong representation, broad representation and a mix of skills on this body going forward. When those positions are determined we will announce them.

Mr MANDER: Minister, will this person have to have some union background?

Mrs D'ATH: No.

Mr MANDER: I now move to Skilling Queenslanders for Work—an investment of \$240 million. Could you please give me the definition of what a successful outcome of Skilling Queenslanders for Work would look like?

Mrs D'ATH: As you would be aware, under the previous analysis done by Deloitte Access Economics in relation to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program it showed that for every \$1 invested there was almost \$8 returned to the economy through that investment. Also, we have said that our target is to support up to 32,000 Queenslanders into work through a suite of targeted skills, training and programs. So what we want to do is make sure that, when we are looking at these programs and the applications and the outcomes from these programs, we are re-engaging people either through education, in training or employment. That is the aim that we are seeking to achieve. It is not simply

finishing a qualification, or getting a qualification, or finishing a program; we want to see ongoing success in either taking up further training, or getting into employment, or, importantly with those disengaged youth, re-engaging with the education system.

Mr MANDER: Minister, you mentioned the Deloittes study where you claim that each dollar invested in this program will return \$8. That is an incredibly big claim. So \$240 million means that that will return an investment of \$1.9 billion. Could you point out, please, where those savings appear in the forward estimates?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. That claim, as the member puts it, is in the Deloittes Access Economics report. So it is, unless you are questioning the ability of Deloittes to accurately assess the program that existed—

Mr MANDER: I am questioning your understanding of it.

Mrs D'ATH: I am simply reflecting what that report showed from the program when it previously operated and what the return was to the economy in that program.

Mr MANDER: I am asking you where we will see that return in the forward estimates of either your department or some other department. Where are we seeing those savings? You can make in bold letters claims about that return on investment but you cannot give us any detailed explanation of that statement.

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. In relation to that statement in the Deloittes Access Economics report, it talks about \$8 being returned to the economy. It is not a \$8 direct saving to the budget bottom line; it is benefits to the economy. If we are talking about training, we are talking about getting people off the unemployment cycle. In doing so, there are significant long-term benefits and savings to governments. The fact is that early intervention, investment in training, investment in skills, getting people back into the workforce, getting people back into education, saves governments money in the long run. There is plenty of evidence around to support that argument.

Mr MANDER: I am simply asking if you could give me some of those details of that plenty of evidence.

Mrs D'ATH: I am sorry that the member does not support the theory that early intervention and investment in training provides benefits for the economy in the long run. I am sure I can dig out some statistics in many reports that talk about the cost to the economy, to the welfare system, to homelessness, to the health system, drug addictions, mental health, the justice system, youth justice, detention centres, the department of communities—all of the costs that come when you do not invest in training and skills.

I have heard the comments from the opposition in the past and some of the debate in the parliament that they think we are just throwing money and wasting money at training. I disagree. As a government we believe that if you want to grow your economy, if you want to increase productivity into the future, you invest in training and skills. You do not let people sit there on unemployment, or become long-term unemployed, or get intergenerational long-term unemployment because that costs the economy. That costs government. All governments know that. I should not need to produce evidence as to the benefit of training and skills and education and what it does as far as the economy and growth into the future. If I need to produce reports, I am sure we can dig some out for the member.

Mr MANDER: If you want to highlight, as you have in your budget documents, that particular statement I think you need to be able to justify the statement and show how that return in investment will actually come about. But anyhow, you have answered the question.

Mrs D'ATH: This is a four-year program and the outcomes of this program will be clear to see from all parties and the member will be able to ask next year at estimates how that program is progressing.

CHAIR: Thank you, Attorney. We will go to the member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Minister, for being here. I have got a question about Skilling Queenslanders for Work as well. Before I ask that question I just wanted to say how excited my community is that this program is back. In fact, the day that you announced that this program would be returned I was at a community forum of a couple of hundred people and there were cheers when the news was announced. It is a very popular program in the Caboolture region and thank you, Attorney, for bringing it back. Minister, the first question I have is can the minister outline the range of programs that form part of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I am well aware that your community, but communities right across Queensland, have been eagerly awaiting this program being re-established. I have heard it time and time again from community organisations. I saw in my own community over the last eight years as an elected representative the benefits that the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative produces. There are a number of initiatives underneath the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. The programs consist of the Community Work Skills program, a program that funds community based organisations and local councils to create jobs and deliver customised support and training services to disadvantaged Queenslanders; the Ready for Work program, a program again for community based organisations and schools, P&Cs and P&Fs to deliver basic job preparation and employability skills courses up to six to eight weeks to unemployed youth aged 15 to 24 years to get them ready for work. I should say the Community Work Skills program can be up to six months for that program under Skilling Queenslanders for Work. The Get Set for Work program, and the member might be aware of this one, it was particularly useful for our youth workers and community workers in that space, is an intensive employment and training program over 12 months for 15- to 19-year-olds who are early school leavers and disengaged and disadvantaged youth to transition them to the workforce or undertake education and training or return to school. The Youth Skills program is one that basically brings together my two portfolios of Attorney-General and Justice and Training and Skills. Youth Skills funds community based organisation programs to assist 15- to 19-year-olds who are subject to court orders or bail to undertake nationally recognised training and provide integrated learner support. What we know is that if we can get these young people early, who are committing offences, and get them into training, get them into programs, we have got a much higher chance of stopping these young people offending and getting on a better path for the future which will be not just a social benefit, but an economic benefit for the state in doing so.

There are two programs within Skilling Queenslanders for Work that are there to complement the other four. The other four are short-term to 12-month programs about training, skills, re-engagement. The final two are about taking that next step and that is getting employers to employ these individuals. First Start is a program that provides wage subsidies to local councils to employ additional trainees. The program offers opportunities for young people and disadvantaged job seekers to gain nationally recognised qualifications and 12 months employment by undertaking a traineeship. Work Start incentives is an incentive program that rewards private sector employers with a one-off \$2,000 payment after a qualifying period if they employ a Queenslanders in a traineeship or apprenticeship who has already participated in one of those other four programs. So, if they have already been through Community Work Skills, Ready for Work, Get Set for Work or Youth Skills and they have been engaged as a trainee or an apprentice with a private sector employer, that employer will be able to get this financial incentive to do that. We believe that those two elements about those longer-term prospects with traineeships or apprenticeships complements those other programs under Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Attorney. It is a very extensive program and not something that has necessarily been formed independent of community engagement and that is my next question: what has been the community engagement process in Skilling Queenslanders for Work, the application process?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. We have gone through a comprehensive process. Even before it was decided to open up applications, in considering the length of time that those applications should be opened, I requested the department to go and talk to some key stakeholders who have had involvement in these programs before to look at what is a reasonable time frame for organisations to prepare applications and put them in. The reason I did that is the landscape has changed considerably from three years ago. Community organisations were very successfully implementing a range of programs—state and Commonwealth—across a whole range of areas. Through cuts by the previous LNP government a lot of community organisations lost 50 to 75 per cent of their funding. They have put off a large majority of their staff and, in fact, we have lost a whole lot of expertise in this state where community workers and youth workers not just left that employment, but they left that industry because there was nowhere to go. There was nowhere to go because everybody felt the pain. Some organisations shut their doors, others barely stayed open. I know in my own local community, organisations went from 18, 20 staff to three to four. Often their own managers are not collecting wages anymore just to keep the doors open. They are really scraping by because of the cuts that were made to this sector. I know the resources, the skills and ability to prepare grant applications—we know that is a whole skill on its own—is not necessarily there and that organisations need time to develop what program should we apply for, what can we deliver with the resources we have got and how quickly can we actually get those resources in place. We do not want to set community

organisations up to fail, nor do we want to see this program fail. To do that you have to take into account that many organisations have lost a lot of expertise and staff over the last few years. So we agreed to keep the application process open for seven weeks. In doing so staff right across the Department of Education and Training in the training and skills area, particularly in the regions, held forums, public forums, that were well and truly oversubscribed in their attendance. I understand that there were 22 Skilling Queenslanders for Work information sessions throughout 21 separate metropolitan and regional locations across the state. More than 1,400 interested stakeholders attended an information session, which shows the strong interest in the return of this initiative.

Can I say that is not the end of it. Applications have now closed. We have regional committees set up to consider those applications and make recommendations back to the department. I want to keep the consultation going because we want to make sure that those who are unsuccessful get feedback from the process. We also want to hear feedback from those information sessions: any issues, any barriers that organisations believe exist or where further clarification is needed, we will look at where are the applications, what programs, are there needs to have more information sessions to inform the community about particular programs and making sure that they are flexible and adaptable to the needs and that we are not putting in place unnecessary barriers to help those most vulnerable in our community to get into this program.

CHAIR: I will go to the member for Ipswich West next.

Mr MADDEN: What is the government doing to ensure that Queensland's school students are being provided with the skills they need for life after school?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. That goes to our overall plan in relation to the VET investment plan. I mentioned in my opening statement that we are investing an additional \$139 million, a 22 per cent increase, in the VET investment plan. This is about making sure that we are investing in VET overall, but also we are making sure that we are investing in VET in schools. This was part of our election commitment. The \$34 million over the next three years included investment in foundation skills and VET in schools. VET in schools is one of those things that, can I say, I have always been passionate about. The concept is great but it has taken some time to actually get it to where it needs to go. I think there is a lot more work to be done in this space. I say that because the concept was rolled out but, quite honestly, our schools, our secondary schools, did not necessarily have the facilities to truly optimise that vocational education training in our schools. I say that because any one of us can look back at our old schools and think of the kitchens that we did home ec in. It was mum and dad's sort of oven in the corner there. It was a normal kitchen environment. It did not reflect a commercial kitchen. What we see now is a whole lot of our secondary schools that have amazing commercial kitchens that they are not just using themselves but they are sharing with other schools in the region. I am seeing schools across the public-private divide actually sharing, across those schools, those amazing resources. The old manual arts blocks did not reflect a workshop or a normal business. Now they do. We have laboratory schools. We have manual arts blocks. We have commercial kitchens operating in many of our secondary schools. We are building up the resources. Now it is making sure that we have the proper expertise in qualified teachers and trainers and matching that with what industry demands are. It is all well and good to give kids going through school a whole lot of qualifications or competencies towards a qualification, what you need to make sure of is that we are looking at where were the jobs in that region, what are the demands for that region and how do we match those jobs with those qualifications. And we need to be engaging with industry and business and saying, 'What skills do you need? Is it the pre employment courses? Is it training in aged care or disabilities? Is it manufacturing or construction?' We need to be engaging a lot better with business, industry, training providers, the school, the principals, the teachers and matching that with the jobs. There is a lot more work to be done. I am very proud of the fact that as part of our election commitment that we are reinvesting in VET in schools. It will be an important job also for Jobs Queensland to also be looking at this area so that when our kids come out of school they are in the best possible position to move into either further training or into employment because, as we know, our youth unemployment is very high.

Mr MADDEN: I have a question about the abolishment of QTAMA. I would like a picture of how life has changed with the TAFE system with the abolishment of QTAMA?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. What this means, and the chief executive officer of TAFE Queensland may want to comment on this as well, is that we have control over our public assets again. What it means is that when we plan and we are doing an audit and we are developing a 10-year asset management plan going forward for our TAFE campuses, that we are doing so in the framework of how do we optimise these facilities to grow training opportunities, support employment in regions and to get the most out of these facilities. That might mean that some facilities are no longer

needed, it might mean that some of the buildings on these sites are not needed, but instead of just flogging them off to anybody or leasing them out to direct competitors on a single site we are doing so in a way that it optimises the potential into the future of those facilities and of TAFE Queensland.

That does not mean we do not have competition. We have great partnerships happening on some of those sites already, but it is about how we capitalise and how we strengthen those training opportunities and strengthen TAFE Queensland. The fact is that you cannot push TAFE Queensland out of its own buildings to make way for private providers that are going to compete for the same courses. That is not supporting TAFE Queensland and it is not supporting choice. You cannot talk about contestability and a market-driven model by removing one of those choices. You remove one of those choices if you deliberately push TAFE out of its own facilities so that it cannot operate any more.

CHAIR: Non-government members.

Mr MANDER: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I have a final question on Skilling Queenslanders for Work. Minister, of the 32,000 people who will receive training through this program, how many of those people will be gainfully employed at the end of their training?

Mrs D'ATH: As you are aware, applications have closed. Applications are currently being considered and they will be announced shortly. As far as how many end up in employment, that is the sort of evidence that we will collect as the program progresses. This is a four-year program and the first round of applications has not been announced yet. That information will be gathered as the program progresses and we will be able to have evidence of the training, skills, education and employability of those individuals, at the end of that program.

Mr MANDER: What percentage of people being employed at the end of the program would need to be reached for you to think that the program has been successful?

Mrs D'ATH: Employability is one measure. As I have already said, it is about employability, it is about furthering training and it is about reengaging in the education system. You have to look at the individual cohort and the individual program and what it hopes to achieve, and measure it against those individual programs. That analysis will be done and the information will be available for everybody to see what the outcomes are from the programs.

Mr MANDER: So getting a person a job is not the major objective?

Mrs D'ATH: We have made it very clear that, through these programs, we seek to get people back into either education, training or employment.

Mr MANDER: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS, where you have talked about creating an independent training ombudsman. Recommendation 187 of the Weller review, initiated under the Bligh government, recommended the abolishment of the training ombudsman. How do you justify reinstating this position?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question and I appreciate the comments on previous reports and the Weller review in relation to this issue. Quality within the vocational education and training sector is an area of key focus for the Palaszczuk government and is part of the Rescuing TAFE commitment, with funding of \$34 million over the next three years. As part of that, the government has committed to invest \$5.5 million over four years to establish an independent training ombudsman. The training ombudsman will offer an independent review role for the provision of VET in Queensland, assisting VET consumers such as students, apprentices, trainees and employers and will be able to receive complaints about all VET related matters. We know that consumers sometimes face great difficulty manoeuvring around the complex VET market in ensuring that they receive a quality VET experience.

There has been a range of changes in the training space over the past few years. The Training and Employment Recognition Council, which was the state body that oversaw the registration and accreditation of RTOs and the scope of qualifications they delivered, was abolished. We have ASQA now established at a Commonwealth level. A whole range of changes have occurred, including through the new further education legislation. A gap has arisen in relation to somewhere for individuals to go between the department and ASQA if they have concerns about the quality of training, the marketing of training, how it is being delivered, whether they are getting what they signed up for; employers' concerns about training, whether it is with workplace health and safety or industrial relations; the student, the trainee or the apprentice knowing what their rights are. There is not one single place that they can go to. Working with ASQA, we have discovered that there is not really a closed loop here. Matters are referred off. Over the past few years I have noticed that matters of complaint are referred off to ASQA and there seems to be some view that the job has been done simply by referring it off.

There is no real tracking of the results when issues went off to the Australian Skills Quality Authority. We believe it is important at a state level to ensure that there is a body that organisations, businesses, training providers and individuals can go to in order to get advice and to lodge complaints. Some of those complaints may end up being referred to ASQA, but at least the Queensland training ombudsman will be able to track the complaints and ensure there is some outcome, that a decision is made and that people are aware of what is occurring with those complaints.

Recently I held a round table in relation to the establishment of the Queensland training ombudsman with a whole lot of stakeholders, including representatives from ASQA, the Queensland ombudsman and training organisations to talk through what the scope of the training ombudsman should be and whether, in fact, it be called the 'training ombudsman'—in South Australia it is called the training advocate—ensuring that the work that they would do would not be inconsistent with the work of the Queensland ombudsman. There is already an understanding that there would be a memorandum of understanding between the two of how they will work, but the deputy Queensland ombudsman, who came along to that round table, acknowledged that when the Queensland training ombudsman existed they would refer a lot of matters to the training ombudsman because of their specialist skills and expertise in this area. In the round table I also heard that the sector wants someone to advocate for them. They want a strong advocate in support of the VET sector. We hear negative media about training from time to time. We need to be singing the praises of the VET sector because they do a great job. We have quality training delivered in this state and we need to be talking about that.

At the same time, I do have real concerns—and I have raised this with the federal minister at the ministerial council—around VET fee help, the current system and the marketing of it. I will give you just one example. A 60-year-old woman who suffers depression and anxiety has been unemployed for the past two years. She gets a knock on her door from two young men who are doorknocking her complex, selling a course under VET fee help. She invites them in because they are saying this could help with employment. Within minutes, they have convinced her to sign up to a \$15,000 diploma. The selling pitch was that it is okay, because if you never earn over \$54,000 you will never have to repay it. Thankfully, the next day the woman attended one of her normal appointments with an organisation and told them what she had done, and they helped her get out of the program. This is not necessarily a reflection of the training that is being delivered, but we are signing up people through VET fee help who may not have basic foundation skills. They may not have the literacy skills to complete the course. They probably need to start with a certificate I, II or III before they sign up to a \$15,000 diploma that may never get them employment.

I am hearing this all across the country. There are real concerns in this space and I believe the Queensland training ombudsman can assist us in identifying whether there are systemic problems. I was very pleased that the ASQA representative at the round table said that he supported our actions in establishing a Queensland training ombudsman. The Commonwealth has said that they are now considering establishing a Commonwealth training ombudsman and some of the other states are watching closely what we are doing in this space. I welcome ASQA's support in what we are doing and I welcome that the Commonwealth is considering doing the same thing.

Mr MANDER: Minister, I would contend that the Weller review made that recommendation because they recognised that there are a range of different agencies that can provide the services that you mentioned. I would say that this \$5.5 million allocation is just pouring money down the drain.

Mrs D'ATH: I appreciate the member's comments, but you just made the point for me: the problem is that there are lots of organisations. This can be a really complex area for a business, student, apprentice or trainee who is trying to figure out where to go, how to make a complaint, how to get help, how to get some support and advocacy. There is no one stop shop to go to. I believe that, considering the role of the department and the fact that you need that separation, an independent body such as a Queensland training ombudsman can give that advice, because some of that advice might relate to a decision made by the Department of Education and Training and it is important to have that independence. The reality is that we have none of that. Between the department and ASQA, there is no training body to oversee any of this.

Mr MANDER: Minister, how many unique students undertook training with TAFE in 2014-15.

Mrs D'ATH: I will refer that question to the Chief Executive Officer of TAFE Queensland.

Ms Schmidt: Just shy of 125,000 students undertook training with TAFE Queensland in 2014-15.

Mr MANDER: Thank you very much. Minister, of the \$34 million that you have allocated to the so-called Rescuing TAFE policy, how much of that money will be dedicated to employing more TAFE teachers?

Mrs D'ATH: The member raises an important point that, as part of our election commitment, part of that \$34 million over the next three years is going towards—

Mr MANDER: I just want that one answer, thanks. How many teachers will be employed through the \$34 million?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member but I want to make sure I give an accurate answer. I advise that in the election and as part of this ongoing budget we have committed to increasing the number of TAFE staff and teachers by 100 over the next three years. The current breakdown I will just get for you—

Mr MANDER: That is fine, actually. That is all I need to know. I appreciate that: an extra 100 teachers.

Mrs D'ATH: I am trying to answer the member's question.

Mr MANDER: That is fine, you have answered it. I appreciate that.

CHAIR: Hold on, member for Everton. Let us hear the answer.

Mrs D'ATH: That is fine. If the member is happy with my stating the policy position, which is clearly on the public record already, which is creating up to 100 new full-time equivalent teaching and support positions over the next three years.

Mr MANDER: Thank you very much. Minister, in an answer to a question on notice I was told that in 2015-16 there will be 120,000 estimated students in TAFE. What we will have in the next financial year is a reduction of 5,000 students, but we are increasing the number of teachers, who will be teaching less students. How do you justify that increased expenditure?

Mrs D'ATH: On the accuracy of those figures, I will get the chief executive officer to comment on your claim that we are going to see a reduction—

Mr MANDER: I can table the question on notice, if you like.

Mrs D'ATH: In relation to the number of students, I am very confident that, in the years going forward, we are going to see a growth in TAFE. Why? Because we are reinvesting in TAFE. I certainly congratulate TAFE Queensland for the great work that they do. TAFE Queensland has done a remarkable job, despite what has been occurring to it over the past three years, in terms of their marketing campaign and their efforts to increase their student numbers. TAFE Queensland is the largest training provider in this state. Let us not downplay that. We should be very proud of our public provider and the great work that they are doing. However, in relation to student numbers and why we would be investing and putting more teachers and more staff into TAFE going forward, it is because we want to grow TAFE; we do not want to tear it down

Mr MANDER: But you have not projected that in your future figures. You have only 120,000, which is a reduction. Minister, I would contend that this policy should not be called 'Rescuing TAFE'; it should be called 'rescuing TAFE teachers'. You are putting more money into more teachers with less students. It makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

Mrs D'ATH: The Chief Executive Officer of TAFE Queensland might have some additional comments to make on that question.

CHAIR: I was wondering whether it was an actual question. If the CEO is able to provide any further information, I am sure the committee would be willing to hear from her.

Ms Schmidt: I can certainly add context to the total expected student numbers in 2015-16. Projecting student numbers, which is a unique individual interacting with a registered training organisation, is a difficult projection in itself. Based on 125,000 students in 2014-15, of course, we have put in strategies to stimulate growth across the state. Economic factors affect demand for training in the state and across the country. As we project those numbers, we do so in a conservative way to make sure that we are competing in market.

Those numbers are certainly in areas in which we are looking to grow and we expect to be able to grow them as we expand our service offering into the higher education sector, into VET and schools, as the minister covered before, in a greater way, into disadvantaged communities and other arrangements that I suspect will be stimulated both in 2015-16 and into the following years. TAFE Queensland is about growing and servicing the needs of the people of Queensland, whether they be school leavers, career changers or those just willing to gain greater skills to benefit their lives.

Mr MANDER: I refer to page 10 of the SDS and the service area of training and skills. I am intrigued by a few of the targets in 2015-16. If we look at the proportion of all attempted competencies successfully completed we had an actual of 93.9 per cent in the last financial year but next year the target is less than the actual that we achieved this year. Why is that the case?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I will ask the department to expand on this in a moment in relation to those targets. In referring to the figure of 93.9 per cent, obviously the member is referring to the estimated actual for the 2014-15 year. I take the member to the 2014-15 target which was 90 per cent. That targets remains for 2015-16. So there is no reduction whatsoever in the target that is set in relation to service standards.

Mr MANDER: It is not very aspirational if your target next year is less than the actual you achieved this year. In my view that is a target for mediocrity. Why would the target not be higher than the actual you achieved this year? Surely we are trying to improve every year?

Mrs D'ATH: That is simply a target. It reflects the target that was set by the previous LNP government in relation to service standards. I will ask the Deputy Director-General to comment further—

Mr MANDER: And we exceeded that target.

Mrs D'ATH: I will ask the Deputy Director-General to further comment in relation to the service standards outlined in the SDS.

Ms Wauchope: I will make a brief comment. It is true to say that the target is set at 90 per cent, as it was in the previous year. This is actually based on benchmarks that we use across the country around completion rates. Clearly the achievement of 93.9 per cent in the previous year was fortuitous and we would certainly be aiming to deliver more than 90 per cent in the coming year.

Mr MANDER: I would say it is exceptional; it is a great result. Why would we be trying to increase that? When I look at the proportion of graduates employed or in further study again there is a lower target. I just cannot understand why we would accept less than what we have already proven we can achieve. I think that is really targeting for mediocrity rather than excellence. Am I still going, Chair?

CHAIR: Yes, you are.

Mrs D'ATH: I am waiting for a question.

Mr MANDER: I turn over the page to page 11 of the SDS. I notice that the target figure for the next financial year for the average cost per competency successfully completed is 14 per cent higher than the actual for the past financial year. Can you explain the increase and the average cost per competency?

Mrs D'ATH: I will ask the Deputy Director-General to comment in relation to those adjusted figures.

Ms Wauchope: As you may be aware, the average cost per student is actually calculated based on the total cost for the VET service divided by the number of students who are actually going through the system. It just happens that the number of students who progressed through the system last year was a lot higher than was expected. Therefore, the total cost per student reduced to what was expected. It is expected going forward that those numbers will actually return to the benchmark depending on the nature of subscriptions in the courses.

Mr MANDER: So again we are projecting that next year we will have fewer students compared to the year just gone?

Ms Wauchope: They are projections that are not necessarily based on the actual achievement. It could well be, as happened in the previous year where we actually outstripped the performance in terms of the actual numbers progressed, that that may again happen in 2015-16.

CHAIR: We will go to the member for Ipswich West to ask a question.

Mr MADDEN: Can the minister or the CEO outline what initiatives TAFE is undertaking to improve understanding of its services and what initiative it is undertaking to promote TAFE internationally?

Ms Schmidt: I thank the member for the question. Obviously we take seriously our role of not only promoting TAFE Queensland but also promoting vocational education and training and the difference that it makes in people's lives. If we start with our brand, our brand is associated—and we intend to continue this way—with high-quality education and training. We have invested to improve our product, services and the opportunities that we offer to the community as the tertiary education and training sector continues to change. We think we have a vital role to play in that regard.

Specifically, we have sought to raise the role not just of TAFE Queensland but of the students and what they achieve as a result of the training that they undertake with us. It is particularly critical now that we operate in an increasingly contestable marketplace.

Our Make Great Happen campaign was developed and produced with our students playing a central role in all the elements of our creative work. When you see ads for TAFE Queensland on bus shelters or billboards you are seeing real TAFE Queensland students with real stories and experiences to tell.

Our brand campaign encourages school leavers and career changers to think of TAFE Queensland as a modern and viable option for their tertiary studies that will get them a job. Our results have been positive in that regard. We have 96 per cent brand recall and certainly 92 per cent of job seekers see a viable outcome through TAFE Queensland. Our most recent campaign for the midyear intake drove 500,000 inquiries to our website, call centres and student enrolment desk. It shows the pervasiveness of it.

So too our international marketing is being successful. We now service students from more than 80 countries. They choose to study in country with TAFE Queensland. We are generating more than \$32 million in revenue. Key countries from which TAFE Queensland sourced international students in the financial year 2015 include India, South Korea, Papua New Guinea, China and the Philippines.

Our international strategy 2015-2019 includes a range of initiatives for us to continue to not only promote Queensland as a destination for international students and TAFE Queensland, more pointedly, but also to extend our operations offshore. There are many and varied numbers of contracts that we have offshore.

What is also core to our international offering is the Australia-Pacific Technical College, funded through the Australian government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This was extended with funding of \$96 million over the next three years. We deliver through five campus countries and 14 non-campus countries training to the people of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and the surrounding Pacific islands.

Mr MADDEN: Could the minister or the CEO outline developments in the provision of training in youth detention centres?

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you very much for that question. From the education side I will not comment on that, but from the training side we have ensured that there is training happening again in our youth detention centres. When I was the shadow minister I was up in Townsville last year. I heard while I was up there that training had just been pulled out of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. It was really important to me once I was appointed as the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills to do what I could to see those services reintroduced. I had the opportunity to tour the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre quite early on and have recently been to the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre.

It was disappointing to see when I went to Cleveland that there was a brand-new trade training centre sitting there empty. I was told that the TAFE teachers had been pulled out and the training had stopped in August last year. I am very pleased to say that that training is going back in.

They do sheet metalwork, woodwork, commercial cookery and a range of other things. As I have said before, there are a large number of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander kids in our youth detention centres. When you get the opportunity to teach young Indigenous men from Palm Island basic skills like fixing outboard motors that is a real skill that they will use when they go back home. In terms of the woodwork that they do, the staff at the detention centre will flat pack the table or whatever it is that they have built and send it back to their remote or rural community so that the Indigenous youth can take some pride in the work that they have done. We can then encourage them to continue on with their training.

There is a lot of more work to be done in this space. I am thrilled that my two departments are working hand in hand to determine what we can do to not just provide the education, which is extremely important in youth detention centres, but also the training elements, especially when it comes to 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds. They deserve the same access to VET qualifications and competencies as others. It is more important than ever that we provide those so that we can try to stop them reoffending and get them on a better path. There is wonderful work happening in our youth detention centre through the Department of Education and Training.

CHAIR: Just on that subject, I am sure there are other opportunities in North Queensland, particularly with respect to the hospitality industry. Are there opportunities available for some of those youths to have access to those forms of training or otherwise?

Mrs D'ATH: The previous Labor government approved the building of that trade training centre and it was built and completed under the last government. That includes a commercial kitchen area. There is woodwork, metalwork and motor engineering facilities and a commercial kitchen that operate out of that trade training centre.

CHAIR: What skills and certification do they gain from those training opportunities?

Mrs D'ATH: As you would appreciate, whether it is the adult corrective services area or youth detention—and especially in relation to youth detention—it comes with a whole other set of challenges, particularly around the length of time they are detained. This is what I was being told at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre the other day. Given the length of time that the youths are there they cannot necessarily complete a whole qualification or a full competency. It is a case of making sure that what they are doing is transferable and recognised—that is, they are proper courses and recognised courses—so that they carry them on when they leave.

There is a lot of work being done in the youth justice area, hand-in-hand with the education and training area, to provide transitional support for youths once they leave. We want to make sure that they can go out and continue their training. When you go back to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative that is why there is a dedicated program for youths who are on bail or on community orders to get into training. We know it can turn their lives around.

CHAIR: Earlier today we were discussing youth justice, in particular boot camps. What sort of training facilities or access to training were those youths entitled to previously?

Mrs D'ATH: The residential component of the early intervention youth boot camps was generally only a couple of weeks or a 10-day residential component. Then the remainder was done in the community. In relation to the sentenced boot camp at Lincoln Springs, which was 28 days, there was no trade training or any of those sorts of facilities there. There were art classes and horseriding, but there were not any actual training elements to it.

CHAIR: I would like the minister to please outline the government's investment in skills and training more broadly and, in particular, focus on what funding is going to private training providers?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I am very pleased that we are investing in and increasing the budget in the VET investment plan for 2015-16. The overall budget this year is \$754.6 million for vocational education and training through the plan. The breakdown of that funding is \$240 million for user choice contracts. This provides a public funding contribution towards the cost of training and assessment for eligible Queensland apprentices and trainees and a range of complimentary programs. This is market driven. It is competitive. There are a number of prequalified suppliers who are RTOs in Queensland who access the user choice contracts.

There is \$231.6 million for the Certificate 3 Guarantee, which gives eligible Queenslanders access to a government subsidy to complete their first post-school certificate III qualification to gain a job or improve their employment prospects and include foundation skills, lower qualifications and VET in schools. And there is \$60 million going towards higher level skills. So this is funding that provides eligible students and employers access to a subsidised training place in a priority certificate IV diploma or advanced diploma qualification or priority skill set to enhance employment opportunities or transition to tertiary studies.

In relation to the breakdown of that particular funding, based on last year's contribution, the private sector received the largest component of funding under User Choice and the Certificate 3 Guarantee. This is despite TAFE Queensland being the largest provider of training to students over the year.

CHAIR: Forgive me for probably trying to identify something, I am reflecting back on an inquiry this committee had in respect of private providers. I recall at this stage there were some questions around the scrutiny of private providers. Who actually provides that scrutiny of private training providers in Queensland?

Mrs D'ATH: The registration of registered training organisations and their scope of training and qualifications that they are approved to deliver is overseen by the Australian Skills Quality Authority. They are the only ones that have the ability to reduce scope or to deregister a registered training organisation.

CHAIR: Are there any current private providers that are being scrutinised in terms of conducting inappropriate measures of training in Queensland?

Mrs D'ATH: I know ASQA from time to time undertakes investigations into relevant bodies. I do not have that detail. I would have to get that detail off the Australian Skills Quality Authority. This is part of the issue of making sure that as a state—this is a discussion across a number of state colleagues—we are actually aware of what ASQA is doing in our own jurisdiction. All states have agreed to this national structure as far as the oversight of the regulation of RTOs is concerned, but it is making sure we are aware, beyond just an annual report being handed down, what problems are occurring, particularly whether there is a systemic problem in a whole industry or a particular industry as we have seen from time to time in the past. That is part of the reason why we want to establish the Queensland Training Ombudsman.

CHAIR: I think the member for Morayfield has some questions on that subject of the ombudsman.

Mr RYAN: That is a good segue because, Minister, I do want to hear more about the Training Ombudsman initiative, particularly because, as you said before, there is a key role here in protecting vulnerable Queenslanders in the training space. I was interested in hearing about perhaps what engagement with the training sector you or the department have had in delivering the Training Ombudsman initiative and perhaps what feedback you may have received from key stakeholders about some people's current experiences in the training sector?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. In addition to a range of stakeholders that I have met over the last six months in the training sector and a number of forums and conferences I have attended with the private training sector and also with TAFE Queensland, I did pull together an actual round table to have discussions and consider what the scope of the Training Ombudsman should be. Some of those people who were at that meeting were the Chief Commissioner of ASQA, the CEO of ACPET, the Deputy Queensland Ombudsman, the CEO of TAFE Queensland, representatives from Fair Trading, private registered training organisations, group training organisations and industry. I think that was a good broad representation to ensure that we had a pretty open discussion about what that role should look like going forward.

This is a position that again needs to be established through statute, and we are in the process of developing that legislation. But once again, just as with jobs Queensland, we do not want to sit back and wait for that to occur. So we will engage an interim Training Ombudsman to fill that role while we establish the statutory authority for that position so that we can start looking at the scope, setting up the office and looking at how best to promote and engage with so many different individuals. You are looking at young kids who do not know where to start when they have a concern, especially if they have just signed up as a new trainee or apprentice, small and large employers who also do not know what their rights and responsibilities are in relation to engaging trainees and apprentices through to the training sector itself and how we can lift the advocacy on behalf of the sector.

We know that when it comes to VET the figures are quite interesting. The number of students going on to university through the VET pathway is increasing considerably. In terms of the whole discussion around OPs, we are actually seeing fewer students going through an OP and a lot more coming up through the VET pathway. So we really need to look at VET as a genuine, strong pathway to not just employment but higher education as well. The comment and the questions from the member for Ipswich West around VET in schools are so important because it is such an important pathway and we need to be recognising that and investing in VET so that we are providing those quality trained individuals for business and also giving them a pathway to higher education.

CHAIR: We will now go back to non-government members.

Mr MANDER: Minister, I just want to refer to the 10-year asset management plan of TAFE assets that you referred to. When will that asset plan be complete?

Mrs D'ATH: July next year.

Mr MANDER: Minister, are you referring at all to the asset plan that QTAMA have already completed?

Mrs D'ATH: We are still in the process of getting all of the information from QTAMA. Their initial plan that they provided to the department did not have a detailed audit plan. So their first report that they needed to provide was really just an overview. It was not a detailed audit, although from information that has since been provided to us we have identified that QTAMA had a lot more information there in relation to our assets and their current status. That will certainly help us feed into first doing an audit of all of the campuses—and certainly TAFE Queensland has a lot of information itself as to the status of its own campuses—and that will feed into our development of the 10-year plan and the consultation that we undertake in relation to those facilities.

Mr MANDER: Minister, will there be any new agreements with private RTOs to use empty TAFE buildings before that asset plan is complete?

Mrs D'ATH: We have made it clear that we will not stop progress in relation to how we manage these facilities going forward. We are certainly not going to see a standstill situation until July next year. We will continue negotiations. I know my door is open and the CEO of TAFE Queensland is happy to take any approaches from private RTOs or businesses or community organisations about how we best utilise those empty spaces. But first and foremost priority will go to TAFE where they need those facilities to deliver training, and that access will be provided to them. Where TAFE identify that they no longer need those facilities, those campuses, those spaces, then we are open to hearing the ideas of how to best utilise those facilities that complement the training opportunities and provide services and support to the broader community.

Mr MANDER: Minister, the answer to that question is contrary to an answer you have given to a question on notice from the member for Gympie where you were asked about the ability of the University of the Sunshine Coast to operate in the Gympie facility. You said—

This Government will put the State's training assets to best use and ensure facilities are available where they are needed; however, decisions about the future of facilities will not be made until an audit of all the assets is undertaken to assess their physical condition, as well as their use.

Minister, that suggests to me that these idle, rundown assets that are currently not being used at all will continue to sit there for another 12 months without any private RTOs getting the right to enter into them.

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for his question. I am happy to correct that question on notice. We are still having discussions—and I will pass to the chief executive officer in a moment to make further comment on this. But we are more than happy to continue those discussions. That does not mean that any individual or other organisation will automatically get access to those properties. It means that we will have discussions about how best to utilise those spaces as long as they are consistent with our long-term aim.

If a private provider is wanting to come on to a TAFE campus to deliver qualifications that is in direct competition with TAFE Queensland, that is not strengthening our TAFE system. That is not the best use of those TAFE facilities because it undermines TAFE. Our job is not to drive down TAFE and starve them of opportunities. TAFE have to manage in a market driven system. They have to compete. For them to get the work, TAFE have to promote themselves and offer those courses. Why would TAFE want a private provider operating out of their same facilities offering the same sorts of qualifications? How is TAFE supposed to compete if as a government we are allowing that to happen?

Where they can complement—and we have this happening right now. Mooloolaba is a great example where USC is delivering its Bachelor of Laws in part through that facility and they are working hand in hand with the community legal centre on site where the students who are studying that undergraduate law degree are volunteering their time and working with the community legal centre on the TAFE site. There is certainly the opportunity for private RTOs and TAFE Queensland to complement each other and partner with each other. I will pass to the CEO who can give examples of that.

Mr MANDER: I do not need to hear from the CEO, thank you. Minister, surely the objective that you should have is to make sure that more people are trained in the VET sector, whether it be public or private, rather than maintaining the public system at any cost. Surely that is your objective.

Mrs D'ATH: Our objective is to ensure that we are providing quality training and getting the balance right as far as having a strong, premium public training provider is concerned, as well as investing in the private sector. We believe we are doing that with the VET Investment Plan and going forward. Let's be clear here: we are not talking about the investment in training and training dollars. We are talking about TAFE campuses, government owned facilities, which have been utilised by our public training provider to deliver training.

Mr MANDER: That are vacant and hide it.

Mrs D'ATH: Well, we can talk about why they are vacant. If we want to start going through the list of how many were shut down over the last three years by the former government, I am happy to go through the list.

Mr MANDER: Why were they, Minister?

Mrs D'ATH: We might need a bit more time to do it, but I am happy to talk about how many TAFE campuses were starved. Let's talk about the Redcliffe campus and foundations skills and foundation skills for people with disabilities. I am happy to have the conversation about the fact that these people

with disabilities are no longer getting the training and instead the previous government shifted the focus to this other program that says it is for people with disabilities, says it is for disadvantaged people, and who does it exclude? Anyone on income support. So if you have a disability and you are on disability support, guess what? You cannot get access. So where do these people go? That is why we need a strong public training provider, because who else is going to step up and look after those most vulnerable in our community?

The private RTOs do a fantastic job in delivering quality training, as does TAFE Queensland, but they do not fill all of that space. They do not deliver all of the training that needs to be delivered including the community service obligation. This is the thing that the previous government completely forgot about—abandoned—and that is community service obligations when it comes to training. I know they talked a lot about training for training sake and all of these courses that the previous minister used to rattle off about—it was not massaging but aromatherapy or whatever else he used to talk about. I find that offensive because foundation skills are important and you need to invest in foundation skills. The previous government just walked away from this space.

TAFE plays a very important role in this state, delivering on community service obligations, delivering on those courses that private providers quite simply do not do because there is no money to be made in this space but also delivering high quality education right through to higher education. But to do that they need facilities. They need facilities and you cannot do that if you are selling them out from underneath them, if you are pushing them out of their own facilities and you are all about the bottom line and getting a dollar out of them, which is exactly what QTAMA was set up to do.

Mr MANDER: Okay, Minister, let's talk about that with QTAMA—

Mrs D'ATH: And the CEO might want to comment—

Mr MANDER: No, I don't need that either, thank you.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, I am chairing this meeting and I will make that decision.

Mr MANDER: She has answered the question to my satisfaction.

CHAIR: No, she was still going when you interjected. Interjections are unruly and you will cease that conduct. I understood that the CEO wanted to make some further comments.

Ms Schmidt: The utilisation of TAFE assets has improved markedly over the last period of time. The guidelines for third-party access are publicly available at this point in time, and leases continue to be put in place during the intervening period of the 10-year asset plan coming together. As the minister outlined, all active requests are managed between the department and TAFE Queensland, and are being managed well.

Mr MANDER: Thank you. Minister—

CHAIR: We have come to a close in respect of this area of the portfolio. Minister, I invite you to wrap up any matters in respect to questions on notice.

Mrs D'ATH: I understand that we have still one question on notice that we will need to provide an answer to the committee, and we will seek to do so as soon as possible. I note in the previous session we did not get a time frame for reporting back on questions on notice. Is there a particular time to get those questions on notice back?

CHAIR: Minister, it is five o'clock tomorrow, Friday the 21st.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you. In closing, I take this opportunity to thank all the Department of Education and Training staff who have worked tirelessly to support the estimates process today. As we know, these things do not come together quickly and a lot of work has been done. I take this opportunity in the six months that I have been the Minister for Training and Skills to say thank you to all of the staff including those out in the regions. I know they have been working tirelessly, especially in relation to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative and getting it up and running. I thank them very much for their efforts. I also acknowledge all of the staff and teachers of TAFE Queensland. The chief executive officer has been very willing to sit down and work closely with me as the minister and the department to ensure that we deliver the best training for the people of Queensland. Finally, I thank all the committee members and the committee secretariat for your time today and for all of the work that you do in relation to both my portfolio responsibilities.

CHAIR: The time has now expired for the consideration of the proposed expenditure of the relevant organisational units within the portfolios of Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills. On behalf of the committee, I thank you, the director-generals, CEOs

and other advisers for your attendance here today. I remind you that any outstanding answers to questions you have taken on notice at today's hearing are to be provided to the committee's research director by 5 pm tomorrow, Friday, 21 August 2015. The committee will now take a short break and the hearing will resume slightly after 3 pm to consider the proposed expenditure of the portfolios of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services.

Proceedings suspended from 2.49 pm to 3.04 pm

**ESTIMATES—LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE—
POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES****In Attendance**

Hon. JR Miller, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services

Mr S Davey, Chief of Staff

Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Mr D Mackie, Director-General

Mr G Davis, Executive Director, Financial Services, Corporate Services

Queensland Corrective Services

Mr M Rallings, Deputy Director-General

Department of Queensland Fire and Emergency Service

Ms K Carroll, Commissioner

Mr M Roche, Acting Deputy Commissioner

Public Safety Business Agency

Mr K Anderson, Chief Executive Officer

Office of Inspector-General Emergency Management

Mr I MacKenzie, Inspector-General

Department of Queensland Police Services

Mr I Stewart, Commissioner

 **CHAIR:** The estimates hearing for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is resumed. I declare the proposed expenditure for the relevant organisational units within the portfolio of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

I am Mark Furner, the member for Ferny Grove and chair of the committee. Mrs Tarnya Smith, the member for Mount Ommaney, is the deputy chair. Other committee members in attendance today are Jon Krause, member for Beaudesert; Mr Jim Madden, member for Ipswich West; Mr Tony Perrett, member for Gympie; and Mr Mark Ryan, member for Morayfield. The committee has granted leave to the following non-committee members to participate and ask questions during the afternoon: Mr Lawrence Springborg, the Leader of the Opposition; Mr John-Paul Langbroek, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition; Mr Ian Walker, the member for Mansfield; Mr Robbie Katter, the member for Mount Isa; Mr Jarrod Bleijie, the member for Kawana; Mr Jeff Seeney, the member for Callide; and Mr Tim Mander, the member for Everton.

The hearing program for today has been published and is available from secretariat staff. It details the order in which we examine the expenditure for the various organisational units within these portfolios. The proceedings today will end at 6.30 pm sharp. I remind all those participating in the hearing today that these proceedings are similar to parliament in that the public cannot participate in the proceedings. In this regard, I remind all present that under the standing orders any person may be excluded from the hearing at the discretion of the chair or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearings to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the conditions of the broadcast of proceedings are available from secretariat staff.

I ask that all mobile phones either be switched off or switched to silent mode. I remind members that, in addition to the minister, the standing orders provide that director-generals and those chief executive officers set out in schedule 7 of the standing orders may be directly questioned by the committee. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask all witnesses to identify themselves before answering a

question. We will focus first on the proposed expenditure in the corrective services portfolio, and from 4 pm for the rest of the afternoon we will consider the expenditure for the police, fire and emergency services portfolio. Minister, I invite you to make an opening statement.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much, Mr Chair. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land upon which we meet and pay my respects to their elders, past and present. Today I have with me to my right Mr David Mackie, the Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. Further to his right I have with me Mr Mark Rallings, the Deputy Director-General of Queensland Corrective Services. Later this afternoon I will be joined by the Police Commissioner, Mr Ian Stewart; the fire and emergency services commissioner, Katarina Carroll; the Chief Executive Officer of the Public Safety Business Agency, Mr Kelvin Anderson; and the Inspector-General of Emergency Management, Mr Iain MacKenzie. I will also be joined by assistant police commissioners, deputy commissioners as well as senior departmental officers. Some of these officers for this session are behind me today.

At the outset, can I say that I am very pleased to be here today delivering on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to keep Queenslanders safe. During these estimates committee hearings the committee will hear how we are delivering on our promises to Queenslanders. Funds have been allocated in the state budget to meet our key commitments. The centrepiece of the Corrective Services' budget is the \$145.3 million set aside over four years to reopen Borallon to address chronic overcrowding in the state's prison system, which was badly neglected under the previous LNP government. Borallon will operate as a no-nonsense, tough, new earning-and-learning facility from early next year. \$8.1 million has been set aside this financial year to complete the recommissioning. It will be a publicly run facility housing almost 500 male prisoners. Importantly, this major infrastructure project will generate more than 200 jobs at a time when jobs and job security are more important than ever.

Our Palaszczuk government remains firmly committed to creating jobs for Queenslanders and also protecting the jobs of Queenslanders, and Borallon will play its part. For those young offenders behind bars, it will not be the same old Borallon. These prisoners will earn their keep. Once inside, they will be given two options—they either work in the prison industries or they study to gain skills so that when they are finally released from custody they will be able to make a positive contribution to the community.

As at 1 July this year more than 1,400 prisoners were sharing cells that were designed for one person. Prison medical officers, nurses and ancillary staff are working in cramped quarters, and staff are telling us that that is unsafe. Collectively, prisons in South-East Queensland are operating at 112 per cent capacity. When Borallon reopens, overcrowding will ease and those other correctional facilities will operate at around 98 per cent capacity. We know there is more work to be done in this area, and I have asked Queensland Corrective Services to continue to investigate short-, medium- and long-term solutions.

We are also delivering on our commitment to have the correct prisoner to staff ratios at the Maryborough Correctional Centre. Nine custodial officers have started work in that centre, and Queensland Corrective Services is continuing to actively recruit staff from the local community. The Corrective Services Academy recently embarked on a custodial officer entry program. As a result, 17 new recruits are expected to complete the program in September this year. Again, it is about creating jobs. The Palaszczuk government remains committed to creating employment opportunities for Queenslanders and promoting jobs growth. There are few more things that are as important as that.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. In accordance with the committee's decision today in respect to the order of questions, we have broken up the question times in 15-minute blocks. I will firstly go to non-government members.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, good afternoon.

Mrs MILLER: Good afternoon.

Mr BLEIJIE: We have heard a lot about you recently but we have not seen much of you. It is very good to see you out of your protection program today.

Mrs MILLER: Mr Chair, I find those remarks to be offensive—

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. Here is the first question.

Mrs MILLER:—and I would ask them to be withdrawn.

Mr BLEIJIE: I have withdrawn, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, today has been an orderly process of asking questions, and I expect you to keep to that order of asking questions. Once again, I call you to ask some questions.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you. Minister, your Premier has abandoned you, your Deputy Premier has disowned you and the Police Union despise you. When are you going to do the honourable thing and resign from your position?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, I do not know whether you heard me, but I asked you to ask questions on the appropriation bills—

Mr BLEIJIE: Correct, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: What you are asking is not relevant to—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, if I may—

CHAIR: No, excuse me, I am chairing this meeting and you will wait until I finish. When there is order there will be a chance for you to ask questions in today's proceedings which are relevant to the appropriation bills. I call the member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair. If I may, with respect to your suggestion just now, refer you to the DJAG SDS page 4 and the specific commentary in the budget document in relation to 'accountability, openness and effectiveness of Queensland's institutions and systems'. Further, Mr Chair, for your reference, there are other references in the police SDS page 4, blue highlight, and page 50 and page 51, so quite clearly we are talking about openness, transparency and accountability. The minister is here to answer questions with respect to her department. Her own department document with respect to DJAG, which oversees Corrections, talks about 'Queensland's institutions and systems' and my line of questioning is very relevant to institutions and systems but particularly accountability, openness and effectiveness. So, Mr Chair, I go to my second question to the minister. You have said in the past, and I quote, that mining camps are Nazi concentration camps, you wanted to free dangerous prisoners, you contacted a whistleblower, you have been referred to the Ethics Committee, you launched a police dog calendar that was full of errors—

Mr RYAN: Point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: You are at war with the Ipswich mayor—

CHAIR: Hang on, member for Kawana. There is a point of order.

Mr RYAN: I have a point of order, Mr Chair. Standing order 115 provides a number of bases for questions to be out of order. Some of those include subjective preambles, inferences or imputations. I submit that the question the member is proposing contravenes standing order 115 and it should be out of order.

Mr KRAUSE: Mr Chair, he has not asked a question.

CHAIR: I will just wait until you get to the question but, once again, member for Kawana, there are no lengthy preambles under the standing orders. So get to your question and then we can proceed.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you. Mr Chair, if I can have your advice. Generally, with respect to a committee member asking for a question to be ruled out of order, one must hear what the actual question is in order to ascertain whether it is out of order or not. Is that correct, Mr Chair?

CHAIR: It does not prevent anyone from raising a point of order, but once again you were entering into an engagement of preamble in respect to whatever the question may be. So it would be nice if you get to the question.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you. My third question to the minister is with respect to SDS page 4 and 'accountability, openness and effectiveness of Queensland's institutions and systems', and I will go to the accountability and I will get to the question, Mr Chair—my third question. Minister, the Premier has said that your contacting a key witness was an error of judgement. The Premier stepped in again and overruled your decision to close the Ipswich communications centre. The mayor of Ipswich said you are the worst police minister in the country. The police union president said that you were never known for good decision-making. The Deputy Premier could not give you her confidence yesterday. I put to you, Minister, that you have lost the confidence of not only the Labor Party but, more importantly, the Queensland public. With all of these recent controversies, how can you stay on as Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services?

CHAIR: Once again, your question is out of order. I will ask you one more time whether you have any questions relevant to the appropriation bills. If not, I will move on to another member.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, I refer to page 4 of the DJAG SDS in relation to 'accountability, openness and effectiveness of Queensland's institutions and systems', and I ask: why should Queenslanders have confidence that you as a minister will be able to uphold this important function of accountability, openness and effectiveness of Queensland's institutions and systems when you continue to avoid any scrutiny about your conduct as a minister in a variety of matters?

CHAIR: Once again, member for Kawana, this is the third occasion that I have had to correct you in respect of—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, is this the protection racket—

CHAIR: Excuse me!

Mr BLEIJIE: Is this the protection racket for—

CHAIR: Excuse me! I now warn you under standing order 185. You are now warned. Are there any questions relevant to the Appropriation Bill?

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, I am deferring to the deputy chairman of this committee.

Mrs SMITH: Mr Chair, I move:

That this committee express no confidence in the Minister for Police given her inability to demonstrate to this committee that she is able to effectively perform the role of police minister and administer the department's budget.

CHAIR: The committee is now going to have a short break and we will return after the committee discusses this matter.

Proceedings suspended from 3.18 pm to 3.25 pm

CHAIR: Due to the private meeting of the committee, we are now on to government members' questions. I will go to the member for Ipswich West.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Chair. Is the committee going to reflect what just took place and the motion that was moved and the outcome of the motion that was moved?

CHAIR: No. It was a private meeting so there will not be any reflection of the discussions of a private meeting.

Mr BLEIJIE: That is very interesting.

Mr MADDEN: Welcome, Minister. I was very pleased to hear your introduction where you discussed the recommissioning of Borallon prison. That will bring much needed jobs to my electorate of Ipswich West. My question relates to safety in prisons. I refer to page 18 of the SDS and the Palaszczuk government's commitment to ensuring prisoners remain safely behind bars in secure prisons. Can the minister please advise what initiatives are in place to ensure prisoners are securely held in low-security facilities?

Mrs MILLER: I would like to thank the member for Ipswich West for the question because I know that you do have genuine issues in relation to corrections because Borallon is in your local area, so thank you very much. The Palaszczuk government has made a very clear commitment to keeping Queenslanders safe. We will be tough on crime and all Queensland correctional centres will continue to ensure those who are at the greatest risk to Queenslanders remain securely behind bars. Queensland Corrective Services is committed to ensuring the security of correctional centres. This is despite managing more than 7,300 prisoners in an overcrowding legacy from the LNP.

Queensland Corrective Services uses various methods to make sure prisoners stay securely behind bars in high-security institutions—like electric fences, razor wire, security cameras, guard dogs on the perimeter, 24-hour surveillance, and vehicle and foot patrols. The Palaszczuk government will spend \$3.5 million this financial year on electronic monitoring in low-security facilities. These new measures will be installed at Lotus Glen, Townsville, Capricornia, Palen Creek and Numinbah. Electronic monitoring provides an additional layer of security management for prisoners in low-security institutions. This means QCS staff will be alerted to any prisoner moving outside the detection zone or removing the radiofrequency strap device.

QCS is also installing a detection fence on the inside of the existing fence at the Capricornia Correctional Centre low-security facility. I have visited the Capricornia Correctional Centre. QCS staff will be alerted if a prisoner comes in contact with the fence via an alarm which has been sent to a pager carried by the Corrective Services officer on duty. The new detection fence is expected to be operational by the end of this month. These security measures are all part of the government's ongoing commitment to keeping Queenslanders safe. Thank you for the question, member for Ipswich West.

CHAIR: We will next go to the member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, Minister. I refer to the SDS where it refers to the rehabilitation of offenders and humane containment. Given the previous LNP government issued pink jumpsuits to prisoners who fell under a criminal organisation segregation order, can the minister please advise what steps the Palaszczuk government is taking to turn this negative exercise into a positive?

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much, member for Morayfield, for this important question. The pink jumpsuits are a tangible reminder of the legacy that the former attorney-general, the member for Kawana, left in Queensland Corrective Services. This is despite the LNP's promise to govern with humility, grace and dignity. The member for Kawana drew his inspiration from a sheriff in Arizona who forced prisoners to wear bright pink uniforms. Here in Queensland I am pleased to advise the member for Morayfield that only 27 prisoners ended up wearing those pink jumpsuits, but the taxpayers footed the bill, which was over \$10,000. Queensland Corrective Services now has surplus supplies of all things pink—in fact, 555 pink T-shirts, 125 pink shorts, 60 pink overalls, 10 white shirts, five pink trousers and 300 metres of unused pink material gathering dust.

When Queenslanders turned on the LNP government at the Stafford by-election the then Premier, Campbell Newman, pulled the pin on those pink jumpsuits. It was, member for Morayfield, a monumental waste of money and the LNP MPs still refuse to say sorry to the people of Queensland. However, turning to your question about the positive outcomes, I am pleased to advise that my office has dealt with many inquiries from the people who are keen to acquire a pink jumpsuit. Given the level of interest, the best and fairest way forward was to request my director-general to donate the surplus pink material to the organisation which is called Be Uplifted. The material will be manufactured into T-shirts by the female prisoners at the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre. As well, one pair of overalls, one pink T-shirt, one pink pair of shorts and one pink pair of trousers will be donated to the State Library of Queensland and also another set will be offered to the Queensland Museum at their request. All remaining pink jumpsuits, trousers, shorts and T-shirts will be donated to the Breast and Prostate Cancer Association of Queensland.

Member for Morayfield, this is a good and a positive outcome. I encourage anyone interested in these items to contact those very worthy organisations. That way we can finally put them to good use and hopefully raise a lot of money to benefit Queensland women who have breast cancer.

CHAIR: Member for Ipswich West.

Mr MADDEN: I would like to ask a question about an election commitment concerning the Maryborough Correctional Centre. I refer to page 18 of the SDS and the Palaszczuk government's election commitment in relation to the prisoner-to-staffing ratio at the Maryborough Correctional Centre, and I ask: can the minister please update the committee on the steps being taken to meet this important commitment?

Mrs MILLER: I would like to thank you very much for your question because I have, in fact, been talking with the member for Maryborough in relation to this issue. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring Maryborough Correctional Centre has the correct staffing-to-prisoner ratio. One way we are delivering on that commitment is by ensuring all correctional centres, which of course includes Maryborough, have appropriate staffing ratios.

The previous Newman LNP government had no regard for safety and the wellbeing of QCS staff. In the past three years prison numbers have soared right across the state. In contrast, the Palaszczuk government considers the safety of staff a top priority. With the increase in prisoner numbers as a result of the Newman LNP inaction, we are committed to ensuring staff safety. We are already delivering on our commitment to Maryborough with nine new custodial officers in place. The Palaszczuk government is committed to creating jobs for Queenslanders and Queensland Corrective Services is actively recruiting for local staff to work at the Maryborough Correctional Centre. As well, the Queensland Corrective Services Academy, which is located very close to the electorate of the member for Mount Ommaney, launched a custodial officer entry program. As a result, 17 new recruits are expected to complete that program next month. The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering on our commitments and we will continue to work with the member for Maryborough, Bruce Saunders, to support the region. I look forward to continuing discussions with the member for Maryborough in relation to these issues.

CHAIR: I ask a question with regard to workplace health and safety, in particular the safety of staff in these correctional centres. I refer you to page 18 of the SDS. Would the minister please advise what initiatives are in place in planning to ensure that continual protection of staff is provided?

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much, Chair. The Palaszczuk government is committed to keeping safe not only Queenslanders but also those who work tirelessly to ensure our safety. We are committed to the safety of all Corrective Services staff and we have a zero tolerance for violence towards staff.

Queensland Corrective Services considers the safety of our staff to be a top priority, promoting staff safely through various initiatives but most notably the Staying Safe strategy. During 2012-13 Queensland Corrective Services launched the Staff Assault Reduction Strategy. This is known as the StARS program within Queensland Corrective Services. StARS focuses on strengthening and enhancing existing procedures and processes in order to support and assist staff to perform their job and manage the prison population whilst ensuring their own personal safety. To further enhance and broaden the work undertaken by the StARS program, Queensland Corrective Services implemented the Staying Safe action plan. This will be an ongoing focus for Queensland Corrective Services, ensuring they continually work on new initiatives for a safe workplace.

For the benefit of the committee, the Staying Safe action plan is aimed at continuous improvement in delivering a safe environment for staff, visitors and offenders in the custodial, probation and parole environment. The action plan is a blueprint for the future. Key projects completed include assault de-escalation and conflict management training for more than 400 probation and parole officers, custodial officer safety training involving scenario based de-escalation training based on real incidents, the appointment of Staying Safe coordinators who are responsible for the development of centre based communication strategies, education and awareness programs, the management and ongoing reporting to the Staying Safe local workplace groups, and the development of a staff safety handbook which provides contemporary advice and guidance to staying safe at work, at home as well as online.

I will inform the committee of projects that are continuing. These include the trial of body cameras for officers in the Woodford and the Brisbane correctional centres' maximum security units, the trial of spot GPS tracking devices to increase staff safety for probation and parole officers, particularly as they travel on isolated roads through Far North Queensland and the trial of new interview pods at Ipswich and Southport district offices, which provide an efficient resolution for transactional visits or where a safety barrier is required while maintaining appropriate sensitivity and privacy.

Mr Chair, the Palaszczuk government thanks our front-line staff and acknowledges them for the significant role they play in keeping Queenslanders safe. We will continue to ensure that their workplaces are safe.

CHAIR: I now go to non-government members. Due to the time, it will be 10 minutes with them and then back to us for 10 minutes. Non-government members?

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, if I can seek your guidance and clarification—

CHAIR: Of course.

Mr BLEIJIE: Earlier I asked three questions about SDS page 4 with respect to integrity and accountability transparency, which is directly mentioned in the government's own budget. You ruled those questions out of order. The member for Morayfield then proceeded to ask a question with respect to the previous government's policy to which the minister responded with a personal attack on me. Mr Chair, is there one rule for the government members and one rule for the opposition members, or can I go back to my line of questioning in terms of integrity and accountability? I am afraid, Mr Chair, that if we continue on this basis with two sets of rulings, then this will be seen by the Queensland public as a protection racket for the Minister for Police.

CHAIR: There is no protection racket happening here. It is a fair process of examining the Appropriation Bills, and that is what we have been doing all morning and I hope the rest of the afternoon we will do the same. I hand it back to you. If you do not have any questions appropriate to the Appropriation Bills, we will then move on to another member of the non-government area to ask questions in relation to the Appropriation Bills.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, the point I am making to you is that the questions were relevant in that I directly quoted the budget handed down by this minister in terms of integrity and accountability. I have one more question I would like to ask in that regard before I move to the director-general, if I can be heard on that question, because the minister has so far refused to answer any of the questions I have asked directly related to the budget in terms of the integrity of her own department.

CHAIR: The reason why there has been a refusal to answer—and I would not call them questions—statements from you is that they conflict with the standing orders, and you know as well as I do what the standing orders are. I encourage you to return to the Appropriation Bill and ask questions of it.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair. If I can ask the director-general, Mr Mackie, or if you want you can give it to your deputy director-general: with respect to SDS page 31 and staffing of the department in Corrective Services, how many operational staff do you have at Corrective Services?

Mr Mackie: Thank you for the question. I will just be a moment while I am getting that answer. The 2015-16 budget full-time equivalent staffing is 4,143.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you. Of those over 4,000 staff, how many would be classified as not currently working due to disciplinary matters which may be being investigated?

Mr Mackie: We are just seeing if we have the information here. During 2014-15 there were 29 misconduct and performance complaints resulting in substantiated allegations and disciplinary outcomes from ensuing investigations. From these processes seven employees separated from employment as follows: three officers had their employment terminated and four officers resigned as a result of the investigation process. The remainder of the employees received one or more penalties relative to the nature of the disciplinary matter.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, DG. Can you give this committee an indication of what matters may lead to one's suspension from official duties?

Mr Mackie: I would imagine there would be a range of matters that could cause an employee to be suspended from duty. Certainly anything that would go to misconduct or serious misconduct, significant breaches of codes of conduct and other workplace standards.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, DG. I can give you an example and you can give me a yes or no if you like. If there was, for example, a prima facie case against a public official in Corrections of providing a false statement, would that lead to disciplinary matters?

Mr RYAN: I rise to a point of order. I take you to standing order 115(b)(v), which says that questions shall not contain hypothetical matters. That question is clearly in contravention of that standing order and I ask you to rule it out of order.

CHAIR: I will wait until I hear the remainder of the question.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair. The Director-General has confirmed to the committee that staff members at Corrections have been stood down on disciplinary matters. It is directly contained in the budget because these are staff of Corrections. I said that if there was a prima facie case of providing a false statement, would that lead to a disciplinary matter in Corrective Services?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, are you referring to any specific case at all? Otherwise, I am going to have to rule on this being—

Mr BLEIJIE: How about if I phrase it to the Director-General this way: of all those staff members that you have said were stood down or suspended, were any of those cases surrounding either the issue of providing false statements or cases of not following procedures with respect to confidential information or the security of documents that would lead to suspension?

Mr Mackie: I have the list of disciplinary issues here. Based on what I have in front of me here, no.

Mr BLEIJIE: Director-General, I appreciate the fact that you may not have these details with you at this point in time, but I can refer you to a case with which you will be familiar, and so will the Deputy Director-General, with respect to a particular staff member in the North Queensland area. This lady is on suspension because she breached departmental guidelines with respect to handing out information from her workstation from her email address. I will not mention the name, but I hope you recall which one that is. It has been in the public domain. Is it the ordinary course of action in the department when a complaint is made—for instance, like the case that I referred to before—that the departmental official would be stood down or suspended pending the investigation?

Mr Mackie: I think an initial investigation or initial assessment of the situation would be the first point. Based on that there would be a decision as to whether or not they were suspended or otherwise.

Mr BLEIJIE: If the department, through the ethical standards branch, has a view that there is a prima facie case—for instance, as was the case with the North Queensland issue—would that person be suspended while the investigation is undertaken?

Mr RYAN: I rise to a point of order. The member for Kawana continues to pose hypothetical questions.

Mr BLEIJIE: Let me give you the name of the Corrective Services officer who is on suspension and then we will not be dealing with a hypothetical. I know what you are doing, member for Morayfield. I know that you are trying to protect your minister. The Director-General knows the matter that I am referring to. It is not a hypothetical question.

CHAIR: I caution the member for Kawana with respect to providing names before these proceedings, particularly in these circumstances.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair. It is not a hypothetical answering the point of order from the member for Morayfield and seeking an answer from the DG.

Mr Mackie: I have just been advised that the person you are talking about, which I did remember, has filed an appeal so that matter is under—

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, DG. That is why I did not mention the name, but I knew you would remember it. Using that particular example, if there is a prima facie case that there has been a breach of procedure and protocol, on your answer and in that particular case it would seem that it would be best practice for the person to be suspended whilst the investigation ensues.

Mr Mackie: Again you would have to make that decision on a case-by-case basis.

Mr BLEIJIE: Surely Corrective Services has an ethical standards bureau to investigate if there are particularly serious allegations such as breaching confidential information, giving information from computer systems to third parties that might not be involved in the particular situation or a breach of confidential information.

The other point I will make is there was another public case with respect to a father that had failed a drug test going into one of the prisons, and the information of that failure of the drug test was released to the media. You may recall the matter that I am referring to was on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*. If an investigation ensued regarding the breach of confidential information, what would happen to that Corrective Services officer?

Mr RYAN: I rise to a point of order. Mr Mackie has quite clearly said that the matter is under appeal.

Mr BLEIJIE: No, this is a second matter.

CHAIR: I will wait and hear the point of order.

Mr RYAN: Irrespective of whether it is the first matter or the second matter, it a matter which involves an employee of the state and that person is entitled to a fair hearing. Canvassing these matters in this forum—which are not related to the Appropriations Bill—is not only inappropriate, but a contravention of the standing orders. I ask you to rule the member out of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: Before you rule, if I may. The budget gives the department of corrections, through the department of justice, money to pay employees. It also has an ethical standards unit contained within the department of justice which is contained in this budget. This committee is debating the money given to the department of justice in terms of investigations. I am trying to ascertain the level of threshold that the department of justice and corrections places on its officers in terms of investigations. I have used two examples without mentioning names. In terms of this committee debating the money that goes either to employee expenses or the unit that is directly able to investigate breaches of confidential information against public servants it could not be any more relevant.

If the member for Morayfield succeeds in having this line of questioning ruled out of order, then I ask: what are we here for if we cannot debate the budget and the integrity and accountability of the minister? The member for Morayfield talks about fairness. Let's give the minister fairness and let her answer the questions.

CHAIR: On the subject of fairness, non-government members have run out of time. I call the member for Morayfield.

Mrs SMITH: I move that the private deliberations held earlier today be made public.

CHAIR: No doubt we will need to adjourn. Subject to the time, we will see whether we have time to proceed with this area of the portfolio. We will adjourn the hearing at this stage.

Proceedings suspended from 3.54 pm to 3.57 pm



CHAIR: We will go to the member for Ipswich West.

Mr MADDEN: Minister, I refer to page 31 of the SDS on staffing. I note the previous Campbell Newman LNP government's business renewal program and I ask: can the minister please advise the committee of the impacts of this program on jobs and what steps the Palaszczuk government is taking to improve services and create jobs at a time when jobs and job security are more important than ever?

Mrs MILLER: I would like to thank the member for Ipswich West for the question. Under the previous Newman LNP government, Queensland Corrective Services initiated a number of projects related to so-called business renewal. This so-called business renewal would have led to further job losses for public servants. Let us be clear about that: further job losses. As a matter of priority our Palaszczuk government put a stop to this renewal.

Our government is firmly committed to maintaining front-line services in the Queensland Corrective Services system. Under the Newman LNP government business renewal program there were plans to outsource Correctional health services, Correctional maintenance services, ancillary services and Queensland Corrective—

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order. Are we talking about the Newman government budget or the Palaszczuk government budget? Because the minister seems to be talking about the Newman government budget.

Mr RYAN: On that point of order—

Mr BLEIJIE: Can we have a ruling on my point of order?

Mr RYAN: I am allowed to speak to the point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: You do not let me speak.

Mr RYAN: I always do.

CHAIR: Member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: On the point of order, Mr Chair, estimates applies to the entire financial year. I know the member for Kawana has a short memory, but half of the financial year actually involves the Newman government years.

CHAIR: That is correct.

Mr RYAN: So it is within the minister's ambit to refer to those periods of time.

CHAIR: Continue, Minister.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much, Chair. As I was saying, they also intended to outsource Queensland Corrective Services training. The previous government also planned to review watch-houses and prison support operations, which was code for more outsourcing and in fact more Public Service sackings.

As part of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to improve services and also create jobs, work that contributes to the improvement of Queensland Corrective Services's core business and those of partnering agencies will continue. I want to outline those projects that are underway. They include management contracts redevelopment, engagement of the non-government sector, a register of Queensland Corrective Services's assets, prison infrastructure condition assessment, electronic monitoring, rehabilitation and intervention, and video conferencing for court matters. This government remains committed to protecting the jobs of Queenslanders. We can do that and we can still ensure that Queensland Corrective Services continues to improve core business to deliver better rehabilitation outcomes for prisoners and to keep Queenslanders and their jobs safe.

Mr RYAN: As the minister probably knows, the Woodford Correctional Centre is located in the Caboolture region, and I refer the minister to page—

Mr KRAUSE: As a point of order, according to our estimates hearing schedule, the time for examining the Corrective Services element of the budget has expired.

CHAIR: Notwithstanding the time that we have gone over in other areas of portfolios earlier today, there has been a waste of time today with respect to the need to have private meetings, so this will be the last question and then we will move on to the next portfolio. I call the member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Mr Chair. It is a very important issue to the people of the Caboolture region. They will be keen to hear the minister's answer. Minister, I refer to page 30 of the SDS and I ask the minister to outline how the allocated \$10.4 million in the 2015 state budget will be used in correctional centre enhancements, including of course the Woodford Correctional Centre.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you, member for Morayfield, for that question. I want to just start off by saying that, certainly unlike the Newman government, our Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring our prison system remains in good order and is keen to take advantage of new technology to enhance community safety. As part of this commitment, \$10.4 million has been set aside, as the

member for Morayfield has outlined, to enhance correctional centres across the state. Of that \$10.4 million, \$3.5 million will be invested in establishing a tracking system for low-security custody offenders. Electronic monitoring provides an additional layer of security management for prisoners housed in low-security correctional centres. Electronic monitoring of low-security prisoners is currently used in other jurisdictions in Australia and in fact around the world. The introduction of radio frequency monitoring technology in low-security prisons will enhance Queensland Corrective Services's ability to monitor prisoner movements. Radio frequency monitoring technology also allows for the location of a device to be monitored in a detection zone and it has the potential to also monitor prisoners inside of buildings.

The government will also spend \$2.3 million at Lotus Glen Correctional Centre to upgrade the potable water treatment plant, enhance security including software upgrade, video motion detection upgrade, video enhancement software upgrade as well as key safe and biometric replacements. Queensland Corrective Services have also invested \$1.9 million at the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre to complete the wastewater treatment plant modifications as well as security enhancements including key safe replacement, biometric upgrade, lightening protection upgrades, SMS software upgrades, training simulator upgrade and prison property system upgrade. As well, \$900,000 has been allocated to prisoner infrastructure projects including \$300,000 for a Brisbane Correctional Centre car park expansion and \$600,000 for security enhancements to the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre master control room and access controls and—I know you are interested in Woodford, member for Morayfield—it also includes \$1.8 million to upgrade the power supply at the Woodford Correctional Centre. Unlike the Newman LNP government, we do not lock people up and forget about them. The government has a responsibility to ensure that our prison system is in good order and to deliver upgraded technology to enhance community safety.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That now concludes this area of the portfolio in relation to Corrective Services. We will now consider the portfolios relating to Police, Fire and Emergency Services and the PSBA. Thank you. Good afternoon and welcome. As I said, we will now consider the Police, Fire and Emergency Services organisational units within the minister's portfolio. Minister, I welcome you to make an opening statement in respect of this area of your portfolio.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much, Mr Chair. Joining me at this afternoon's estimates hearing is Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, Katarina Carroll, who, I am delighted to say, is Queensland's first permanently appointed female fire and emergency services commissioner. Thank you for being with us. Also with us today is Kelvin Anderson, the chief executive officer of the Public Safety Business Agency, and Iain MacKenzie, the Inspector-General of Emergency Management, and with him are senior officers from my department. The state budget has delivered a much needed boost to fire and emergency services across Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is investing in new and upgraded fire stations and in new operational equipment for firefighters and new fire appliances. Under the former Newman LNP government, firefighters had their funding cut and there was a significant reduction in training. The state budget in 2015 recognises the hard work being carried out by fire and emergency services workers. Importantly, it delivers the resources that they need to keep Queenslanders safe. Some \$55.5 million has been set aside for new and upgraded fire and emergency services facilities and equipment. The Palaszczuk government is investing \$14.6 million on new and upgraded fire stations, including \$4 million each for new stations in Bundaberg and Petrie, \$600,000 for a new station at Dayboro and \$250,000 for a new station in Gordonvale. While I am talking about new stations, I note that the member for Gympie and I were together for the opening of your Pomona fire station and everyone in Pomona was very delighted that the member for Gympie could join with me at that opening.

As part of the funding package, \$1.9 million will go towards upgrades to the Bundamba station, which of course is very close to my heart, \$1.6 million for upgrades to the Burleigh station and \$600,000 for an upgrade to the Roma station. We will also deliver \$27.5 million for replacement and also new urban and rural fire appliances. We are also investing \$5.5 million in specialised equipment, including new thermal imaging cameras, technical and road crash rescue equipment, portable decontamination facilities and temporary shelter facilities. Some \$1.1 million has been set aside for State Emergency Service capital grants and \$185,000 for rural fire brigade capital grants and that is very important, particularly as we head towards the summer season. The next big challenge for our fire and emergency services personnel is the threat of bushfires and then from November to March communities need to brace themselves for cyclones as well as storms. But in all kinds of weather it is reassuring to know that our fire and emergency service workers are equipped and they are ready to respond to whatever nature throws our way.

It is a tough job and it takes special people to do this job. The Palaszczuk government recognises the importance of supporting our police, our fire and our emergency services personnel. That is why we have invested more than \$2 billion in the public safety area of the state budget, with funding for additional police and police vehicles and new equipment facilities and resources for fire and emergency services. It is about helping them do what they do best—looking after the safety of their fellow Queenslanders no matter where they live in this great state. This budget builds on our promise to Queenslanders that we will always put their safety first. Thank you, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I understand the member for Mount Isa has a question related to the PSBA. So I might invite him to ask that question.

Mr KATTER: Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, I refer to page 50 of the Service Delivery Statement, the Public Safety Business Agency—the PSBA—which describes the strategy of—

Enhancing the Queensland community's ability to access public safety services, when and where required.

The vast Mount Isa electorate that I represent has a number of isolated Indigenous communities. They all have a large barrier that exists there, which is a blue card, that stands between them and, in many cases, employment. It has been discussed with you before about how that can be a barrier despite them having large consent or consensus from local authorities and local elder groups to be approved for the type of work that they have applied for. So I ask the minister what strategies the PSBA is undertaking to provide blue card services in these communities and how that is working at the moment?

Mrs MILLER: I would like to thank the member for Mount Isa for this question. The member knows that I was with him in Mount Isa recently during that terrible time of the tragedy. Member, my concerns still are there with your community and I would ask that you pass them on to them before I answer the question. Again, I know that it is going to be a long time for them to recover, but we are still there with you with any support that you may need as the community recovers from that tragedy.

Mr KATTER: Thank you, Minister.

Mrs MILLER: I have made it clear really that we need to do whatever we can to assist those outlying communities. The member for Mount Isa has spoken with me in relation to this matter. I think that making blue card services more accessible in the remote and Indigenous communities of the member's electorate is very important. I just wanted to say that at the outset.

Many Indigenous people struggle with the blue card application process, particularly where they might have a criminal history. This can then impact on their ability to find work in their communities. The PSBA's blue card service division follows a three-tiered approach to increasing the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in communities in the blue card system. This includes community education and engagement activities, providing practical and culturally appropriate assistance to facilitate applicants' continued engagement in the blue card application process and establishing formal partnerships to identify practical and sustainable strategies to increase communities' access and also participation in the blue card system.

Some of the benefits of increasing understanding of and participation in the blue card system in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities include assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to better understand how the system aligns with their own cultural objectives for children. Individuals and communities are actively supported and encouraged to participate in regulated services for children. Children receiving regulated services have the opportunity to engage with and witness appropriate cultural role models and risks of harms to all children and young people in regulated environments in Queensland are mitigated to the same standard by the consistent application of the safeguards provided in the blue card system.

Blue Card Services applies culturally appropriate administrative processes to increase procedural fairness to applicants whilst ensuring the same level of protection is afforded to all children receiving services regulated by the blue card system, such as providing applicants with assistance to make submissions regarding their eligibility, including the option to provide oral submissions—member for Mount Isa, I am sure that people would be more than happy to be able to provide those oral submissions to the officers concerned—also, advising applicants of options available to assist them, including appropriate referrals to agencies who can provide support; and affording additional time for the management of correspondence for applicants in remote and rural areas. Now, in relation to—you asked specifically about Mornington Island?

Mr KATTER: Mornington Island would be a good one.

Mrs MILLER: In relation specifically to Mornington Island, I am very pleased to advise the member that the PSBA has now approved that the Mornington Island identification card will be accepted as a document that provides sufficient evidence to establish the identity of a blue card applicant in accordance with section 4(2)(c) of the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011. Specifically in relation to Mornington Island, the Junkuri Laka Wellesley Islands Aboriginal Law Justice and Governance Association advise the PSBA that in many Indigenous communities providing sufficient proof of identity was often difficult, as you have said to me before, member for Mount Isa, as most do not have primary identification. By that I mean driver's licences, passports, or birth certificates as there was a limited ability to get one.

Junkuri Laka has implemented the Mornington Island ID card that is issued to members of the community whose identity can be confirmed by staff due to personal knowledge of their family, verification of details with police and by checking as well on the electoral roll. For members of the committee, this card contains the holder's surname. It also contains their given names, their address, their date of birth. It also has a photo on there, a signature and has security features in place, including holographic coating. Junkuri Laka advise that the card has already been accepted as identification by the births, debts and marriages agency, which I am very pleased about, the regional airline service and the transport agency.

Mrs SMITH: Point of order.

CHAIR: Just hold on, Minister. Is there a point of order?

Mrs SMITH: Mr Chair, I am just wondering about the lengthiness of the answer.

CHAIR: Are you getting to the—

Mrs MILLER: Yes, I am.

CHAIR:—finalisation, Minister?

Mrs MILLER: I am. Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mrs MILLER: I am very pleased that we have been able to work with the PSBA to help our Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander communities in relation to this matter. We really have to take into account their culture and also, today, having this Mornington Island identification card being accepted.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr KRAUSE: Minister, in order to ensure that the importance of accountability, openness and effectiveness of Queensland's institutions and systems, in particular the parliament and government, is maintained, have you offered your resignation to the Premier?

CHAIR: That is completely out of order. So I will move on to the next non-government member who wishes to raise a question in regard to the Appropriation Bill. Member for Mount Ommaney, do you have a question?

Mrs SMITH: No. I refer to the member for Kawana.

CHAIR: No. If not, we will move on to government members if there is no—

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Chair. You called the member for Mount Ommaney and the member for Mount Ommaney is referring to the member for Kawana for the non-government question.

CHAIR: Right. Member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, are you aware that the member for Bundaberg has sent out correspondence through the department of QFES with respect to the SDS and communications with the public? Are you aware of that?

Mrs MILLER: I was only made aware after she had sent correspondence out. I did not speak with her before she sent that correspondence out but, yes, I was aware after she did send that correspondence out.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, I seek leave to table a copy of both the correspondence from the member for Bundaberg and also an email from the acting area director, Mr Phil Williams, Bundaberg Area Office, Rural Fire Service Queensland, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, you have noted or confirmed to the committee that you are aware—

CHAIR: Just hold on please, member for Kawana. I will wait until people have copies of what you are tabling, please.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair my question to the minister—

CHAIR: No, I do not have a copy yet. You should have provided appropriate copies.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, I tabled a copy.

CHAIR: Until such time that you do, we will not proceed.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, I tabled a copy and it is not up to each member to ensure that everyone in the room has a copy.

CHAIR: Unfortunately, you have not provided enough copies for the rest of the members on the committee. So until such time, I would like to know what you are referring to.

Mr BLEIJIE: Then I suggest that you ask the secretariat of your own committee to provide copies, because it is not—

CHAIR: They are getting copies, member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: The question is to the minister. I am not sure how the minister cannot answer if she has a copy, which she has confirmed she has.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, I am chairing this committee and it is under my chairmanship that I will decide whether this matter that you are tabling meets the standing orders.

Mr BLEIJIE: Whilst they are copying that, I refer you to SDS 29 in relation to effective communication. Perhaps whilst copies are being made I might direct a question to the commissioner, Mr Chair, with respect generally to page 29 of the SDS. Commissioner, with respect to communication from QFES, is it standard practice for departments to distribute political propaganda to members of the public?

Commissioner Carroll: Certainly, it is not. It is against, obviously, our policy to do that.

Mr BLEIJIE: So how did this happen?

Commissioner Carroll: I am aware that a meeting was trying to be arranged between a member of the RFBAQ and the member for Bundaberg. I understand that meeting did not come to fruition and an email was sent to Mr Williams, who then distributed it to some other eight people. When that was brought to my attention some days after the event, I caused my deputy commissioner to investigate what had occurred. That investigation clearly revealed that Mr Williams was given incorrect advice in that he could distribute that email. When that was brought to my attention, my deputy commissioner immediately contacted Mr Williams to be in contact with everyone to whom he sent that email to have it withdrawn, which was the case. He was also spoken to, as was the senior member, in the inappropriateness of that. Since that time, they have been counselled. I have also referred that matter to the Ethical Standards Unit to ensure that it was just an error of judgement and nothing more than that. I have also sent an email out to the entire organisation to ensure that they abide by QFES policy.

Mr BLEIJIE: Commissioner, with respect to that answer, you have just confirmed that the QFES has an ethical standards unit.

Commissioner Carroll: The ethical standards unit actually is within PSBA and that matter was referred to them.

Mr BLEIJIE: If you have a member of staff that has prima facie committed particular or alleged offences in the department or allegations have been made, do you have a schedule of types of offences that may or may not be committed that say, well, you are going to be suspended or it is an automatic suspension until the investigation happens or that does not require suspension? Do you have that process in your department?

Commissioner Carroll: It is more so a case-by-case situation. For instance, an example such as the one that we were just speaking about, my initial inquiries have shown that it was an error of judgement. I did send it, though, to the ethical standards unit to be open and transparent about what we had found, and if it is anything more than that I will get advice from them as to what action I will take. But certainly there are other disciplinary matters and it is case-by-case as to what is done in each case.

CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Carroll. In respect of the agreed commitments of time we now move to government members. I call the member for Ipswich West.

Mr MADDEN: Minister, I refer to SDS page 30. In the lead-up to the bushfire season, can the minister please advise the committee what steps are in place or planned to protect people whose homes and properties are vulnerable to the threat of fires in the Ferny Grove electorate?

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much for that question, member for Ipswich West. Communities in the Ferny Grove electorate are protected by the Arana Hills, Eatons Hill and Ashgrove fire and rescue stations. They are all permanently crewed with four firefighters and an urban rescue pumper. The Arana Hills Fire and Rescue Station conducts fire education at schools and child-care centres, adult community education, Safehome inspections, building safety inspections and evacuation education in aged-care facilities. Over the past four months staff from the Arana Hills Fire and Rescue Station have conducted fire education talks at a number of local schools.

There are five rural fire brigades in the Ferny Grove electorate. They are Samford Valley, Samsonvale, Clear Mountain, Closeburn and Mount Nebo. These brigades are made up of around 300 volunteers, including 17 volunteer community educators. Rural Fire Service Queensland continues to develop and deliver the Prepare.Act.Survive community information campaign to local communities and schools.

We have around 2,200 residents living in bushfire prone areas in the Brisbane rural fire service region and they all should have received the Prepare.Act.Survive information as part of Operation Cool Burn. This ran from April to July this year. To reinforce the fire safety message, an emergency service expo was recently held at Samford along with a community meeting at Clear Mountain Lodge and a landowners' expo at Closeburn. At the Samford expo eight rural fire brigades provided Prepare.Act.Survive presentations to around 1,000 community members. They conducted bushfire safety simulator demonstrations. I would like to thank them for delivering that message to over 1,000 people. Along with the community awareness campaigns, 47 hazard reduction burns were undertaken in the area over the past 12 months.

Upcoming events include local activities that will be held in Bunya and Mount Glorious as part of the Get Ready Week in October. These activities will focus on building disaster resilience. The state emergency service also stands ready to support our fires in their local communities. All these actions and plans are designed to ensure that the local community is well prepared for the bushfire season. Can I assure you that our emergency crews are also well prepared and ready for swift action should the need arise at any time.

CHAIR: I now go to the member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Chair, and I note particularly the chair would have been happy with that response given he is a volunteer firefighter in the Ferny Grove electorate. I am sure he is very happy about the response. Minister, I refer you to SDS page 38 which refers to the capital budget of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and I ask: can the minister please provide the committee with details of the \$9.6 million that has been earmarked in the state budget for new and upgraded fire and emergency services facilities and equipment?

Mrs MILLER: Thank you, member for Morayfield, for that very important question. The lion's share of this funding—that is, around \$5.5 million—has been allocated for investments in high performance operational equipment for use by front-line emergency workers and volunteers. I would like to go into detail. It includes specific purpose operational trailers to bolster regional and rural communications with access to satellite and geographic information, mapping services and mobile training; fully operational gas and chemical suits, portable decontamination facilities and scientific analysis and detection equipment—this helps emergency workers respond to hazardous chemical and biological incidents; thermal imaging cameras to better detect and manage industrial and mobile property fires along with petrochemical and explosive incidents; portable generators and emergency lighting equipment; breathing apparatus compressors to help with personal refills of self-contained breathing apparatus—this equipment protects front-line emergency workers when they are battling structure fires and hazardous gases and materials. Then, of course, there is the technical rescue equipment for use in swift water rescues, urban search and rescue, vertical and trench rescue and search and rescue operations in Queensland, interstate and internationally. Also road crash rescue equipment and self-contained temporary shelter facilities for use as temporary accommodation, incident command centres and forward posts at major bushfire, flooding, storm, tropical cyclone and other front-line emergency worker, volunteer and community requirements in Queensland and elsewhere.

Our government has also set aside \$2.9 million for upgrades to operational computer information systems, including the Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch system, the operations management system which is used to plan, manage and record all operational incidents, and the

community safety operating system that provides online digital services to the building and construction industries, providing electronic lodgement, assessment, reporting and storage for the fire safety services provided in buildings and major infrastructure. Finally, there is also \$1.1 million for capital grants to state emergency services groups to provide or assist with the provision of vehicles, flood boats, operational equipment facilities and \$185,000 for capital grants to rural fire brigades to assist them with the construction or upgrading of rural fire brigade stations, sheds and other facilities. The Palaszczuk government remains committed to looking after our firefighters and we value their hard work and their effort in looking after fellow Queenslanders and keeping them all safe.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Minister. Minister, can I now refer you to SDS page 29 and can I ask: Minister, please provide the committee with an update on any progress that has been made to date with regard to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Allison review of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to ensure that women in the sector are valued and respected?

Mrs MILLER: Can I thank the member for Morayfield for this question. I can advise the committee that the Palaszczuk government has accepted all 30 recommendations of this independent review into allegations of sexual harassment and workplace bullying in the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Mrs Margaret Allison was commissioned to lead an independent review late last year under the former government following reports of an incident involving QFES employees. This review has identified systemic organisational problems within QFES that limited the organisation's ability to respond effectively to complaints of sexual harassment. I want to make this clear: this sort of behaviour is utterly intolerable and it must be stopped. That is why the Palaszczuk government will act swiftly to implement all of the recommendations. We owe it to the women involved and every woman in the QFES workplace.

I can advise that action has already been taken on many of the recommendations outlined in the review, including: a special QFES harassment information line to provide confidential services to all staff along with an advisory network—that phone number is 3635 3672—that also includes rural fire; a new complaints management framework to help staff and managers ensure that the QFES workplace is free of harassment and discrimination; an update of training material across Queensland to reflect appropriate behaviour with a focus on preventing harassment and supporting staff to make complaints; a trial of a new system of mandatory reporting of complaints, actions taken and an electronic complaints management system; new arrangements to support female recruits through their training and on placement. These are very important reforms. However, there are other recommendations that will also help women feel safe and secure in their workplace, such as replacing the ethical standards unit with a new workplace conduct unit. We will also embark on a targeted recruitment campaign to promote firefighting as a career for women. QFES will establish a network of trained equity advisers to provide advice to employees who may be concerned about discriminatory behaviour, harassment and bullying. Priority will also be given to placing women officers in groups of two or more after they have graduated from the academy.

We will be consulting widely on these recommendations with the intent of implementing them fully. We will be consulting with the UFU. We will be consulting with the officers' union. We will be consulting with other stakeholders. That is what we said we would do in the Palaszczuk government. Women in the workplace deserve to be treated with respect at all times. The government and the people of Queensland would expect nothing less from a Labor government. An implementation committee will be established to oversee this reform process. Our government's priority is to put a stop to discriminatory behaviour in the workplace and create greater gender equity across the entire QFES organisation.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We will now switch to non-government members.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, you heard the commissioner's statement before with respect to a letter that was distributed from the department with an attachment from the member for Bundaberg, which contained blatant political information. What is your view in terms of your department and what action have you taken to ensure that your department does not send out blatant political material?

Mrs MILLER: I support the actions taken by the Commissioner for Fire and Emergency Services.

Mr BLEIJIE: When did you find out about these accusations or the fact that your department had sent out a political letter?

Mrs MILLER: From memory, I think it was from a media request.

Mr BLEIJIE: Commissioner, have you received my letter of complaint dated 10 August with respect to this matter?

Commissioner Carroll: Yes, I have.

Mr BLEIJIE: For the benefit of the committee, I seek leave to table a copy of a letter. I note that as we have progressed in terms of tabling documents over the last three days of estimates the rules seem to have changed, so I have a copy for you, Mr Chair, one for the minister—

CHAIR: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr BLEIJIE: One for the minister and one for the commissioner. Commissioner, can you explain again what actions you have taken against individuals in your department?

Commissioner Carroll: As explained, when this was brought to my attention a couple of days after it had taken place, I asked my deputy commissioner, Tom Dawson, to look into this matter. He found out that a meeting had tried to be arranged between Mr Williams and the member for Bundaberg, which I understand did not come to fruition. As a result, an email was sent to Mr Williams who then sought advice to distribute this further within the Rural Fire Service. The advice that he sought was from a senior officer and the senior officer indicated that he could do that. This was quickly brought to my attention and I then asked Mr Dawson to approach Mr Williams, which he did. He contacted the eight people he had distributed the email to. When I looked at the evidence presented to me, it appears it was just an error of judgement from the senior officer who gave that advice. However, I have since also sent the investigation to the Ethical Standards Unit to ensure that that is the case.

Mr BLEIJIE: Commissioner, departments obviously, through their codes of conduct and the parliamentary ethics act and also the Public Service Act, at all times must remain apolitical. Because this has happened and you have acknowledged it has happened and you have acknowledged that it is an error of judgement—incidentally, your own minister has had a few errors of judgement and her own Premier has said that—

Mr RYAN: Point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is quoting the Premier.

CHAIR: Hold on, member for Kawana.

Mr RYAN: Point of order. The member is entitled to ask a question, but he is not entitled to put imputations and inferences into it. Chair, I refer you to standing order 115 and ask that you rule that part of the question out of order.

CHAIR: I do so. Continue, member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Commissioner, you would agree that all departments should remain apolitical at all times?

Commissioner Carroll: Definitely and the policy certainly supports that.

Mr BLEIJIE: Because this has happened, the Rural Fire Service in that particular area, through your agency and your department, actually covers Mr Bennett, the member for Burnett. As the matter has happened now, will the department afford the other local member of parliament, Mr Bennett, the same opportunity to send out a letter of explanation as your department has let the Labor member for Bundaberg send out?

Commissioner Carroll: My members made an error of judgement and that has been addressed.

Mr BLEIJIE: With respect, Commissioner, I do not think it has. It has been addressed now the matter has been distributed, but I have a copy of the email. I know you said it went to eight people, but I received it from not one of those eight people, so they have forwarded it on to people. Yes, there is an error of judgement, but there is also an unfairness that has taken place in terms of two members of parliament who represent the same area of that Rural Fire Service, but one has been given special treatment.

Commissioner Carroll: I think I have addressed that appropriately within my department. I can read to you exactly what I sent to my organisation to ensure that this does not occur again.

Mr BLEIJIE: I do not need you to read it, Commissioner. I am making the point that, despite the fact it is done and, yes, there is an error of judgement, there is still an unfairness that has taken place with another local member of parliament. I move on, Commissioner. With respect to staffing levels, can you give me the operational staffing levels of QFES?

Commissioner Carroll: Just bear with me.

Mr BLEIJIE: You are fine.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, what was the page in the SDS again, please?

Mr BLEIJIE: I am asking the commissioner to provide the staffing levels. I am asking the commissioner to ascertain through the SDS and point out to the committee where the operational staffing levels are contained in the SDS.

Commissioner Carroll: In terms of staffing levels, the QFES head count is 3,177 permanent staff members and auxiliaries are 2,066.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Commissioner. Of those over 3,000 staff members, how many staff members are on current suspension pending internal ethical investigations from your department?

Commissioner Carroll: I would have to take that question on notice. I do know of three, but to be accurate to answer your question I would have to take that on notice.

Mr BLEIJIE: If the minister is happy for you to take that on notice, I am happy.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Commissioner. If we can deal with the three that you are aware of at this juncture, can you give an example to the committee of a threshold offence that would require a suspension or that would deal with a suspension of a staff member?

Commissioner Carroll: Can I just go back to what you asked me before and give you some more figures. In 2014-15, as at 30 June, there were 26 cases involving 35 allegations of corrupt conduct or serious misconduct involving employees. Of those 26 cases, 15 related to employees of QFES. This is the entire portfolio. PSBA takes care of QFES, PSBA, as well as IGEM. Of the 26 cases, six were reported to the Queensland Police Service for investigation, 16 were investigated by the Ethical Standards Unit and four were dealt with by management. Eleven of the 26 related to QFES, but other than that I will have to take on notice exactly what the 11 were, whether they were suspensions or investigations, et cetera

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you. Commissioner, with respect to the 11—and I note that if the minister is agreeable you will take that on notice and get some details on those—what I am trying to ascertain is the threshold level. If a complaint came to your attention and an allegation was made, at what point would a decision be made by you or your officers that says that the member will be suspended pending the investigation?

Commissioner Carroll: There are some guidelines with that. I did touch on this before. It really is a case-by-case situation. Some of those are actually quite clear. If there was a criminal complaint and there was clear evidence that it was substantiated, certainly a suspension would take place. However, every case is slightly different, so it allows for some discretion in relation to the person who makes that decision.

Mr BLEIJIE: But there would be complaints you have currently where people are suspended?

Commissioner Carroll: Definitely there is.

CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner Carroll. We will go to the member for Ipswich West.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, point of order.

CHAIR: What is your point of order?

Mr BLEIJIE: The point of order is that my recollection is that that is not 15 minutes of time allocated to non-government questions.

CHAIR: What we are doing is sharing the time around to the best of our ability. In fact, non-government members have had—

Mr BLEIJIE: No, what you are doing, Mr Chair, is having a protection and a secret racket for the Minister for Police.

CHAIR: On my count, you have actually had 15 minutes and a further 12 minutes, that is, 27 minutes. Government members have had only 15 in this area of the portfolio. That is why I am going to government members.

Mrs SMITH: Point of order, Mr Chair. We had a discussion this morning that it was 15-minute blocks each and we have not had our 15 minutes. We started, by our timing, at quarter to five. That was what the agreement was this morning. Otherwise, I will move a motion that we will be taking the next 10 minutes.

CHAIR: What I will do is that I will go over. This is your last question, member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, you have just heard the commissioner with respect to the protocol of investigations and complaints with QFES members and some 11 employees. Are you satisfied, from a policy perspective, that it seems to be a low threshold of complaint that would have to be made for a member of QFES to be suspended whilst an investigation takes place?

Mr RYAN: Point of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: This is ridiculous! The minister has not answered one question since 3 o'clock this afternoon that the opposition has asked.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, I have.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, there is a point of order. Member for Morayfield?

Mr RYAN: I am sure that the minister is happy to answer your questions if they comply with the standing orders. You know full well the standing orders are very clear on these matters, because the chair has been making rulings all afternoon about your questions and how they are out of order. Again, you ask a question that is in conflict with standing order 115 and that I ask the chair to rule it out of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, in terms of that point of order, how is a question out of order when it is a question of policy to the police minister with respect to a budgeted item that is budgeted because of ethical standards units either in the Public Sector Business Agency or QFES, and the commissioner herself has indicated there are current active investigations on foot? How is that not in relation to the issue?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, maybe rephrase your question so it is not hypothetical.

Mr BLEIJIE: Minister, the commissioner has confirmed there are cases and members of QFES currently on suspension. Are you satisfied with the low level threshold of a complaint to be made for a member of QFES to be on suspension whilst an investigation is pending?

Mrs MILLER: Before I answer that question, Chair, I know that the member for Kawana was talking about protocols for the dissemination of information before and I wanted to update him before I answer that specific question. The commissioner sent out the protocols for dissemination of information and this particular email reminded all staff of the protocols for dissemination of information. The commissioner asked everyone to note and adhere to the advice. This is it specifically: 'It is not appropriate'—

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, wait for the minister's response to your question.

Mr BLEIJIE: I have a point of order, Mr Chair. Mr Chair, I will have you take my point of order, please.

CHAIR: Continue, Minister.

Mr BLEIJIE: That is not the question that I asked the minister.

Mrs MILLER: But you asked it earlier and I am trying to give a full—

Mr BLEIJIE: The commissioner has answered it. I did not ask you; I asked the commissioner.

Mrs MILLER: No, I am giving you further information—

Mr BLEIJIE: I do not want your further information.

Mrs MILLER:—for the benefit of the member for Burnett.

Mr BLEIJIE: I asked the commissioner and the commissioner answered my question. Now I ask you to answer my question.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, interjections are unruly. You will wait to hear the minister's answer. Minister?

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much, Chair. This particular email says—

It is not appropriate for QFES staff to disseminate any unauthorised information throughout their stakeholder networks.

That is the first point. The second point is—

As a government department we are required to ensure that personal opinion and political commentary are not included in any correspondence or social media.

Thirdly—

Any request for members of parliament—

Mrs SMITH: Point of order, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Minister, there is a point of order.

Mrs SMITH: This is not the answer to the question that the member for Kawana asked. This is an extension.

Mrs MILLER: Just wait. Be patient.

Mrs SMITH: Standing order 118.

Mrs MILLER: Be patient.

Mr BLEIJIE: Answer the question you have been asked.

Mrs MILLER: I am getting to that. The third point states—

Any requests from members of parliament—

Mr BLEIJIE: Getting a bit narky, are we? The old Jo-Ann is back, hey?

Mrs MILLER:—

whether government or opposition, who wish to contact staff or volunteers will need to be referred through to our minister's office.

In relation to the specific question that you asked, member for Kawana, I will never interfere in operational matters of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.

Mr BLEIJIE: But you phoned a key witness in a police investigation.

CHAIR: I go to the member for Ipswich West.

Mr MADDEN: I refer to pages 29 and 30 of the SDS. Can the minister please update the committee on the work being carried out by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services personnel, particularly the work undertaken by the swift water rescuers during the unprecedented floods that hit South-East Queensland in late April and early May of this year?

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much for the question, member for Ipswich West. It was a tragic time for so many people. My thoughts and prayers are with the families and the loved ones of the five people who died in that severe flooding. In fact, I had the opportunity to ring some of those families. It was heartbreaking. It was a tragedy that left its mark on so many people.

I pay tribute to the emergency crews who are out in bad weather doing what they do best—looking after the people in our community. They do a tough job, let us make it clear. During the flood, emergency crews conducted 44 rescues and provided urgent help for many more people directly affected by the flooding. I pay special tribute to the brave QFES swift water rescuers who put their own lives on the line to protect the safety of others.

The media campaign 'If it's flooded, forget it' swung into action after the 2010-11 storm and cyclone season when 37 swift water deaths were recorded. The 'If it's flooded, forget it' message is broadcast through all media outlets when we have bad weather and when forecasters predict that big rains are on the way. We would like to thank our media partners for broadcasting that message.

QFES has developed a safety education program called StormSafe to help primary school students better understand the dangers of floodwaters. We do not want primary school students or high school students on boogie boards anywhere near water or drains when there has been heavy rain.

Swift water rescue technicians and operators were deployed to 195 water related incidents throughout the state between 1 July 2014 and 30 June this year. As at 30 June 2015 there were 293 trained level 2 swift water floodwater technicians across the state and 78 swift water operators. All permanent fire and rescue personnel are trained to level 1 first responder standard which involves performing land based rescue techniques.

Auxiliary firefighters stationed in areas that are susceptible to flooding are also provided with this level 1 training. An awareness training package is made available to all rural and auxiliary personnel and other agencies on request. SES volunteers also operate flood boats to help out when areas are flooded. Some 240 flood boats have been allocated to SES groups across Queensland.

Queensland is a very big state, as we all know. We are prone to major weather events including floods, cyclones, severe tropical storms and bushfires. That is why it is always reassuring to note that our emergency crews and our volunteers are equipped and ready to act swiftly when disasters strike. I would like to personally thank our QFES officers and the volunteers who work side by side with them when these disasters occur. They get on with the job. They are heroes in our community.

Proceedings suspended from 5.05 pm to 5.19 pm



CHAIR: The estimates hearing for the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is resumed. We will now consider the proposed expenditure related to the police organisational unit. I invite the minister to make an opening statement in this area of the portfolio.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you, Mr Chair. It is an absolute honour and privilege to be the voice of our hardworking men and women in blue in this parliament. Can I start this estimates session today by taking the opportunity to thank each and every one of the over 11,500 officers who make up the Queensland Police Service. They are also supported by many other staff who help them do their jobs every day.

Our police officers have a difficult and often a dangerous job to do. They put their lives on the line to keep all of us safe. Our Palaszczuk Labor government deeply appreciates all they do day in and day out to ensure the safety and security of our community in Queensland. Our government is committed to keeping the people of Queensland safe. But we do not just talk the talk, we walk the walk. I walk it with the Queensland Police officers day in and day out as well.

This budget delivers on that commitment and our commitment to ensure our police are properly resourced to get on with the job. In fact, the Police Union described this year's Police budget as the best in three years. I am sure all members of the committee would agree, that that speaks volumes.

Since the Palaszczuk government was elected 247 new police have hit the beat right across the state. That represents 70 extra officers over and above attrition, which means we are well on our way to delivering on our commitment to deliver an extra 266 new police over the next year. But, unlike the former Newman LNP government, we know that it is not just about extra police on the beat. We need to ensure that they have the most up-to-date equipment available.

That is why we are investing over \$6 million over three years to rollout the body worn video cameras for front-line officers. It is also why over the next year nearly a thousand new and replacement police vehicles will hit the roads of Queensland. It is also why we are investing over \$107 million in new police facilities, technology and equipment, including \$800,000 to complete the upgrade of the Thursday Island Police Station, around \$6.9 million for the replacement of the Kingaroy Police Station and \$800,000 for the replacement of the Nanango Police Station.

Another of the Palaszczuk government's top priorities is keeping Queenslanders safe on our roads. We have already seen too much tragedy on our roads this year. That is why we are continuing to invest in equipment and initiatives to support police in their road safety work. As part of the \$7.2 million Camera Detected Offences Program new mobile, point-to-point and combined speed and red light cameras will be rolled out across Queensland.

The Palaszczuk government will also provide an extra \$20 million over the next four years for police to tackle organised crime, alcohol fuelled violence and the drug ice. Let me make this clear: ice is an absolute curse on our community in Queensland. I have spoken to families from right across the state whose lives have been ripped apart by this toxic drug. That is why we are committing extra funds to boost police capacity to track down and to take action against people who are manufacturing and peddling such a dangerous drug for a quick buck.

This new funding will also assist the QPS continue taking action against outlaw motorcycle gangs across the state. Unlike the LNP, who were obsessed by bikies, we know that they represent just one element of organised crime in Queensland. The QPS will now be better resourced to broaden their scope and focus investigative energy on other types of organised crime as well. The funding package will also go towards funding overtime and travel entitlements for officers tackling alcohol fuelled violence in entertainment hot spots across the state.

I am also proud that our government has committed new funding for police to stamp out unlawful anti-Islamic behaviour in Queensland. I was honoured to be invited to the break the Ramadan fast feast with Brisbane's Muslim community last month. There I was proud to announce that we would provide \$200,000 of new funding to the Queensland Police Service to bolster Operation Mike Sheffield. This will allow the Queensland Police Service to employ two new Muslim police liaison officers.

The Palaszczuk government has also set aside \$25 million for other property and initiatives including new surveillance equipment and an upgraded DNA laboratory. There is \$146,000 over three years to establish community policing boards. Those boards will give locals a say on crime issues. There will be \$6 million to continue the police helicopter service in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast. Importantly, despite the howling from the members from Kawana and Currumbin, who have falsely claimed our government was dismantling the Gold Coast Rapid Action Patrol, I am particularly pleased to advise the committee that the Palaszczuk government has allocated \$11.2 million for the continued operation of the Gold Coast RAP—a boost of \$2 million. We have also set aside some \$3.9 million for the Townsville Rapid Action Patrol.

This year's budget builds on my commitment to always put the safety and security of Queenslanders first. Our police do an amazing job to keep our community safe, often at great personal risk. I have seen this firsthand, time and time again, since being sworn in as police minister, including in Central Queensland after Cyclone Marcia, here in the south-east following the tragic deaths of five people during those flash floods in the northern areas of Brisbane and near the member for Morayfield's electorate and most recently the tragedy up in Mount Isa investigating the deaths of the beautiful Nyobi and River. I am the police's voice around the cabinet table of Queensland. I will always support our police. Our government will always support our police. This budget delivers on that commitment.

CHAIR: I call the member for Ipswich West.

Mr MADDEN: I refer to page 5 of the SDS and page 73 of Budget Paper No. 4, noting the Palaszczuk government's commitment to keeping our communities safe. Can the minister please provide the committee with a progress report on the planned rollout of body worn cameras to help police and their enforcement activities?

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much, member for Ipswich West. I am pleased to advise the committee that the rollout of body worn video cameras for our front-line officers is already in full swing. In fact, wherever I go in Queensland and talk to our front-line officers I can inform the committee they love them. The Palaszczuk government is committed to keeping the people of Queensland safe. One way that we are delivering on that commitment is to ensure that our hardworking and dedicated front-line police have the equipment they need to get on with the job, unlike under the previous Newman LNP government when police were left to purchase their own body worn video cameras out of their own money.

After consultation with officers and the Police Union, we made an election commitment to begin a wider rollout of body worn video to front-line officers across Queensland. I was proud to announce in the state budget that the Palaszczuk government had committed \$6 million over the next three years to begin the rollout. Body worn video will greatly assist our officers in gathering evidence and dealing with complaints. Whether it is in the Road Policing Command or our local general duties, police officers right across Queensland will benefit from these cameras because they capture evidence. They create a record of operational activity and record their interactions with offenders and also with the general public. The use of evidence captured on body worn video can lead to a reduction in the number of cases proceeding to court. For those that do proceed to court, the clear and quality evidence captured by these cameras can help establish the identities of the offenders.

As the committee may be aware, one of the biggest challenges associated with this rollout is not the cost or the type of camera but the issues surrounding the data storage. Body worn videos require huge amounts of storage space and the Queensland Police Service has been hard at work to ensure that these issues are addressed. With around 500 Queensland Police Service funded body worn video cameras, as well as over 1,200 body worn video devices purchased privately out of the police officers' own money, already operating across Queensland, the service data storage is currently being managed within existing resources. However, as part of this wider rollout, the Queensland Police Service is working to put in place a service-wide policy in relation to body worn video data storage.

I am very pleased to advise the committee that an options paper has been completed which has evaluated three concepts to progress body worn videos within the Queensland Police Service. The first option would involve modifying an existing QPS database or systems to allow for the storage of data. The second option requires the integration of products from separate camera and storage vendors to meet QPS requirements. The third option is purchasing an end-to-end commercial off-the-shelf product specifically designed for police agencies integrating a camera system to a digital evidence storage and management system. As part of this proof of concept, the Queensland Police Service rolled out 140 body worn video cameras within the Road Policing Command to trial an end-to-end digital evidence storage and management system. I am looking forward to the evaluation of this trial.

Unlike the previous Newman LNP government, the Palaszczuk government knows it is not just about recruiting more police but about ensuring that our officers are properly equipped to get on with the job of keeping Queenslanders safe. Our government deeply appreciates the work of our police and we will continue to do all we can to support them in their important roles.

CHAIR: I call the member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: Minister, I refer to pages 5 and 6 of the SDS and page 86 of Budget Paper No. 4. Could the minister advise the committee of the steps the Palaszczuk government is taking to combat the illegal use of dangerous drugs like ice, which is destroying many young lives in Queensland and elsewhere?

Mrs MILLER: Thank you, member for Morayfield. I mentioned the curse of ice previously because no matter where I go across Queensland people come up to me and they tell me how concerned they are about the impact of this insidious drug on their families, on their communities, on their relatives and on their friends. This is a dangerous drug and it is extremely harmful. We must make sure that this is not just a police issue but a community issue and together we have to work to get on top of this problem in this state.

Not only does it have a devastating impact on the user's health; it has a massive flow-on effect to their family and friends, the police, the paramedics and the emergency department staff in Queensland public hospitals. At the state election we made a commitment to provide an additional \$20 million over four years to the Queensland Police Service to tackle organised crime, alcohol fuelled violence and the drug ice. Our hardworking and dedicated police officers are working day in and day out to stop the source of ice on our communities.

I am advised that methylamphetamine remains the second most abused illicit drug in Queensland behind cannabis. The Queensland Police Service has noticed a distinct shift in the use of the crystallised form of methylamphetamine, which is known as ice or crystal meth, as opposed to the non-crystallised form. Last year more than 5,573 people faced 17,628 charges relating to the possession or production of amphetamine type stimulants. That is a lot of people. So far this year they have already charged 4,701 people on 14,316 offences. In the first half of the year there have been 3,387 amphetamine type stimulant drug seizures across the state with a total weight of just over 23 kilograms. This goes to show exactly how hard the Queensland Police Service is working to combat this issue.

Our police continue to put themselves at great risk to stop and dismantle these drug-trafficking rings. In June, a significant ice related investigation was undertaken by the Sunshine Coast Criminal Investigation Branch and the Drug and Serious Crime Group. This operation targeted ice dealers serving a large client supplier base on the Sunshine Coast as well as Brisbane. Large supplies were occurring daily involving multiple ounces—around 28 grams of ice being bought at a cost of between \$6,000 and \$7,000 per ounce. The dealers were supplying up to 50 ounces of ice per week—2.2 kilograms of ice were seized by police during the operation and, when analysed, the drug was found to be 75 per cent pure. The three Queensland based syndicate heads have been arrested and charged with drug trafficking, with a vicious lawless association disestablishment circumstance of aggravation. A further 148 offenders were arrested on 558 charges.

In our bid to tackle ice, the Queensland Police Service works in conjunction with our interstate and federal colleagues as well. Intelligence sharing and taking part in the multi-agency taskforces with the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Crime Commission and the Australian Border Force are netting results. The Queensland Police Service is currently working with interstate and federal law enforcement agencies to develop the national e-EUD database, designed to track the sales of chemicals used to manufacture illicit drugs and target drug production at its source. We are also working with the federal government on a National Ice Taskforce that will drive the development and implementation of the National Ice Action Strategy.

Mr Chair, this is beyond politics. We have to work together. Under the National Ice Action Strategy, QPS through the Drug and Alcohol Coordination Unit has responsibility for the development of community awareness, media engagement and workforce information packages relating to ice which can be used by police and health workers speaking with the community. The awareness campaign is targeting regional and rural areas in recognition of the growing concern of ice in these communities. The campaign will include print advertising, social and online media promotion and awareness packages delivered to the community. It is important for people to realise that help and support and treatment are available. They are not on their own. They need to reach out for this help and support and treatment.

I want to thank all of the women and men of the Queensland Police Service for their tireless work often in difficult and dangerous circumstances in helping to reduce this curse of ice in our communities.

CHAIR: I might indulge in one very quick question with one very quick answer. I refer to pages 4, 5 and 6 of the SDS in regard to the Safe Night Out precincts. I would like to know what the Queensland Police Service is doing in regard to meeting the government's commitment to tackle alcohol fuelled violence, particularly in those areas of policing and policies.

Mrs MILLER: In specific areas, chair?

CHAIR: The specific areas of planning and policing of the policies of the Safe Night Out precincts.

Mrs MILLER: Our government is committed to assisting the Queensland Police Service in tackling alcohol fuelled violence, and the reason for that is very simple: there is no place for alcohol fuelled violence in Queensland—no place for it at all. People have an absolute right to arrive home safely at the end of a night out. The Queensland Police Service has targeted alcohol fuelled violence through a range of measures, and these include: the enforcement of alcohol management plans in discrete Aboriginal communities; working with the Office of Liquor and Gaming to monitor disorder and violence associated with licenced premises; multiagency projects such as Project Fend in Mount Isa, It's Your Choice in the Moreton district, member for Morayfield, and Be Safe in the central region. On top of these initiatives, an enhanced policing presence and enforcement activities in 15 designated safe night out precincts throughout the state are designed to curb the incidence of alcohol related violence.

Of the \$5 million committed each year by the government, \$1 million a year will go to the policing response to alcohol fuelled violence. The Queensland Police Service will continue to work closely with other agencies on compliance activities, including liquor licensing. The police will also explore ways that the results of a breath analysis can be used as part of a brief of evidence for investigations of offences against licensees in breach of the Liquor Act. All of these measures are designed to make our community safer for everyone, and our Palaszczuk government strongly supports the police in their efforts to keep Queenslanders safe from harm.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I now go to non-government members.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you. I have a question to the commissioner. Commissioner, could you please advise the committee how many hours you were available for estimates last year? And if you cannot recall, it was about eight. Commissioner, how many hours are you available this afternoon for this committee or has been allocated?

CHAIR: Point of order there. The schedule for the hearings today were agreed as a matter by those on this committee, and I do not see the relevance of this question.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Chair. Commissioner, the examination of the Queensland Police Service is due to finish after six this evening. If the committee thought it necessary because of the issues we are dealing with, would you be available to stay a little longer this evening? The committee can extend the time up to 9 pm this evening. Commissioner?

Mrs MILLER: Mr Chair, my understanding is—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, my question is to the commissioner.

Mrs MILLER: With respect, Mr Chair, the member for Kawana is not allowed to ask questions direct to the Police Commissioner.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am sorry? That would be a first

CHAIR: Sorry, he is, Minister.

Mr BLEIJIE: That is an own goal there, Minister.

Mrs MILLER: Through the minister.

CHAIR: Through the minister. Sorry, that is what I meant.

Mrs MILLER: Member for Kawana, you have to come through the minister to be able to ask the commissioner for police to answer the question.

Mr BLEIJIE: I go through the chair, and the police commissioner answered eight hours of questioning last year, and he was asked direct questions, Minister.

CHAIR: Once again, member for Kawana, you are not a member of this committee. The committee decided weeks ago on the schedule for this particular estimates hearing. We are here discussing the Appropriation Bill. I will refer you to the appropriate area in regard to those discussions.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Chair. Commissioner, I refer to page 4 of the SDS in relation to upholding the law. I ask: if a public official is referred to the police for alleged offences, can you explain to this committee what processes are undertaken once a referral is made please?

Commissioner Stewart: Thank you for that question. I understood that questions had to go through my minister. I am not one of the CEOs who can be directly questioned, that is my understanding, but I defer to the chair of the committee and I am happy to answer your question.

If a referral is made to my office, obviously it is assessed in terms of the criminality of that allegation, as I understand it. I have a special unit set up to assess those matters. At the same time, it would be normal for me, depending obviously on the seriousness of the issue, to talk with the chair of the CCC. I would do that and I would be seeking advice from them whether they wish to take jurisdiction or whether the allegation enlivens jurisdiction. I obviously formalise that process so there is a record of what occurs in that way, and on occasions the chair of the CCC may even need to seek legal advice about that because of the specific nature of their act. But if it is a criminal act, obviously then the chair has the right to simply give me advice. If it is a criminal matter that they believe they do not have jurisdiction over, we would investigate.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Commissioner. I continue on page 4 of the SDS in relation to upholding the law by the Queensland Police Service. If a public official is accused of, for instance, section 91 of the Criminal Code, signing false declarations, or section 57 of the Criminal Code, misleading parliamentary committees, what penalties would be applicable for the police under that investigation?

Commissioner Stewart: I am sorry, Sir, do you mean—

Mr BLEIJIE: If those offences have been alleged to have been committed and the police conduct an inquiry as you have indicated, you conduct the initial assessment, you then investigate it. Could you explain to this committee what penalties would be applicable if one is found guilty of either section 91 of the Criminal Code or section 57 of the Criminal Code or other offences?

CHAIR: Commissioner, that is a hypothetical question so if you cannot answer that I will accept that.

Commissioner Stewart: Chair, I do not have the Criminal Code in front of me. I would have to check. It is a very large document.

CHAIR: That is fair enough. Next question, member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Commissioner, you have recently been reappointed, and I refer to page 1 of the SDS in relation to your reappointment. Are you aware of what the police union have said about the process of your appointment?

Commissioner Stewart: Only through media reports.

Mr BLEIJIE: Would that media report, if you can confirm this, Commissioner, have been that upon your appointment being announced the police union said, 'It was rushed through by the minister. She has never been known for making good decision-making. It is quite clear and evident today it's all about the process.' Are they the comments you are familiar with in the media?

Commissioner Stewart: Well—

Mrs MILLER: Mr Chair, with respect, I think it is very unfair for the commissioner to be answering questions in relation to his own appointment. So with your permission, I would like to answer that question.

Mr BLEIJIE: I have not asked the police minister, Mr Chair, so I am happy to move on to the commissioner for another question in relation to crime statistics.

Mrs MILLER: Mr Chair, I would like to answer that.

Mr BLEIJIE: But I have not asked the minister, and if you have a look at the estimates—

CHAIR: Minister, if you are able to answer—

Mrs MILLER: Mr Chair, I am able to answer that question.

Mr BLEIJIE: Point of order, Mr Chair. If you have a look at the estimates record from the last three to five years of this parliament in this very chamber, it is very clear that when Labor were in opposition and they did not ask the minister, they asked someone else, the Labor chairs were very clear that the minister did not have to answer it because the minister was not in fact asked it. I would like to keep moving on to other issues because I have not asked the minister.

Mrs MILLER: No, no.

Mr RYAN: Point of order. I refer to standing order 183 which says that a minister may at their discretion answer a question or any part of a question asked of them or someone else. So it is within the standing orders that the minister can answer a question that has been asked at this estimates hearing.

Mr BLEIJIE: The commissioner has already answered the question.

CHAIR: Minister.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you very much, Mr Chair. I am aware of the standing orders of this parliament and I would like to thank you for asking me to answer this question. Commissioner Stewart has had a long and distinguished career of service to the people of Queensland and he has provided the Queensland Police Service with strong leadership. Like the Palaszczuk government, Commissioner Stewart's top priority is keeping Queenslanders safe and we look forward to working closely with him over the next two years. I find it very strange that the opposition at the time called the process shoddy because it was under their government that Commissioner Stewart was appointed following a merit based selection process. Commissioner Stewart was appointed by the Newman LNP government for three years with the option for a two-year reappointment. This was done in line with the Police Service Administration Act, and I consulted with the acting chair and the appointed chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission. As it was a significant appointment, like all significant appointments, I also took the commissioner's extension of the contract to the Queensland cabinet. I think it was very unfair to be asking the commissioner about the process in the first place.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Commissioner, with respect to page 4 of the SDS in relation to upholding the law, I go back to questions I was asking before. I realise you cannot answer the hypotheticals so this one should be fairly easy. Have you recently or in the last few days received any complaint against the Minister for Police with respect to alleged breaches of sections of legislation?

Commissioner Stewart: Not to my knowledge.

Mr BLEIJIE: If I can talk with respect to the criminal gang legislation. You were quite a part of getting the resources but also the laws in place to make sure we tackled criminal motorcycle gangs across the state. I refer to an article in the *Courier-Mail* on Tuesday, 15 July 2014. This is in fact the article that I held up at my estimates last year with a headline '... criminal reforms pay off says Queensland's top cop'. Commissioner, acknowledging the work that the wonderful men and women in blue do across the state with respect to tackling criminal motorcycle gangs, can you confirm to the committee that, as has been placed on the record on a number of times by parliamentarians but also the Police Service, the legislation tackling criminal gangs does not just target motorcycle gangs; in fact with your help with the CCC's assistance it actually targets numerous organised crime gangs?

Commissioner Stewart: That is correct.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, commissioner. And you would say, commissioner, that the work being undertaken with the police and the CCC with respect to the VLAD legislation, can you confirm that the recent conviction of a person under the VLAD legislation in fact was not a criminal motorcycle gang member but in fact drug offences?

Commissioner Stewart: That is correct.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, commissioner. Does it concern you that the Attorney-General said in this chamber only a few short hours ago that the government will be repealing the criminal motorcycle gang legislation?

Commissioner Stewart: Sir, I was listening to that commentary remotely, and I understood that the point the Attorney was making was that the current government is looking at the potential to improve the previous legislation and they had written specifically into the terms of reference of the taskforce the option of a repeal of the legislation, bearing in mind that that was a policy of the government previously but on the basis that they believed that through consultation they could actually improve on it. That was my understanding of what the Attorney said.

Mr BLEIJIE: In terms of the previous government, the previous government did put a statutory review into the legislation, but, with respect—not to you but to the minister—we would not have stacked the taskforce with a retired Supreme Court judge who had a few things to say about the former government and—

Mrs MILLER: Mr Chair—

CHAIR: Minister.

Mrs MILLER: Mr Chair, I find the comments of the member for Kawana against a retired Supreme Court judge are offensive and I ask that those comments should not be on the *Hansard* record—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair—

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, you will refrain from interjecting until I hear from the minister.

Mrs MILLER: It is a protocol in this House, Mr Chair, that we do not reflect on Supreme Court judges or District Court judges or magistrates, whether they are sitting or retired.

CHAIR: You are quite correct, and I ask the member for Kawana to withdraw the comments.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, a point of order—

CHAIR: No—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, the minister cannot be—

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, I have already warned you today on your conduct. Do not let me go to the extent where I have to exercise the standing orders under 185.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair I am ask asking—

CHAIR: I ask you to withdraw your imputations in respect of a High Court judge that you made earlier.

Mrs MILLER: Supreme Court judge.

CHAIR: Supreme Court judge, sorry.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, I need clarification from you. I am trying to work with you on this. I am asking: how can the minister, as we do under parliamentary procedure, take offence on behalf of a third party who is not in the chamber to take offence? We have parliamentary procedure under which you cannot take offence on behalf of a third party.

CHAIR: She actually took a point of order if you were listening.

Mr BLEIJIE: But she is asking me to withdraw—

CHAIR: Once again, I am asking you to withdraw those imputations against a Supreme Court judge.

Mr BLEIJIE: He is not a Supreme Court judge.

Mrs MILLER: He is retired.

Mr KRAUSE: Mr Chair, the standing order in relation to being personally offended and all the procedure and precedent set out by various Speakers require members to be personally slighted, to take personal offence, and that clearly has not occurred in this case. There is no point of order.

CHAIR: If you could just give us a moment, we are getting some directions in this area. Member for Kawana, we might get you to rephrase that question that you asked earlier, please.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Chair, rather than rephrase it, I will go back to the commissioner and continue the line of questioning. Commissioner, with respect to men and women in blue on the beat whom I meet right across the state as shadow police minister, there is a real concern amongst your officers that the laws—and I guess with the members of the public—that the criminal motorcycle gang laws will be repealed, particularly as the Attorney made mention this morning of the mandatory sentencing element, that she is opposed to that and the anti-association. If memory serves me correctly, Commissioner, the police advice we received at the time and advice from the Senior Counsel who gave us advice at the time, was that the anti-association disestablishment provisions—in other words, getting the gangs out of the public spotlight and grouping in gangs of more than two or three—was a major element in ridding Queensland of criminal gangs and also the mandatory sentence was a deterrent. Is that still your advice, Commissioner?

Commissioner Stewart: Thank you for that question. I have been on the record many times in saying that I believe that the legislation that we have at our disposal, including the VLAD legislation, has been an important component of the fight against organised crime in this state. However, I also recognise and I thank the government through the minister for allowing us to be part of the current commission of inquiry and being heard on these matters into organised crime, bearing in mind the exposure of the last few years and including this year has given to the depth and breadth of criminal activity by organised groups in this state. I think quite honestly that the community has been rightly

shocked at the level of criminality that has been investigated by the Queensland Police Service together with its partner agencies. I particularly thank those partner agencies including the Australian Federal Police and now the Australian Border Force—that is the Border Force and Customs—and, of course, the intelligence agencies such as the Australian Crime Commission. They have been strong partners in helping Queensland Police attack organised crime wherever it is. I recognise that there is always the objective of continually reassessing both our practices and the legislation under which we operate. We have been given that opportunity by the government to participate in not only the commission of inquiry—and we are very grateful for that—but also the taskforce led by Justice Wilson. We are a full member of that taskforce. So I am very confident that any improvements can be raised with the judge and, of course, raised at the commission of inquiry. Ultimately, whilst I have often said the legislation has been a great boost, we should never be complacent and I am grateful that these inquiries are now continuing.

CHAIR: Thank you, Commissioner. I now go to the member for Ipswich West.

Mr MADDEN: Minister, I refer to SDS pages 4 and 9 and I ask: given that this week is Queensland Road Safety Week, can the minister please advise the committee what new initiatives are being undertaken or planned to enhance safety and help drivers do the right thing when travelling on the state's vast road network?

Mrs MILLER: Thank you for the question and particularly for your interest in road safety. It is an issue that affects everyone in the community, whether you drive a car, a motorcycle, a bike or if you are a pedestrian. The Palaszczuk government is committed to keeping Queenslanders safe on our roads.

Sadly, I am advised that this year 151 people have died on our roads as of midnight 19 August. That is 15 more than this time last year. After the shocking Easter road toll in Queensland when eight people died during that tragic long weekend, our government urgently convened the Safer Roads, Safer Queensland forum to bring road safety stakeholders from across the state together to talk about how we can all work together to reduce the road toll. One of the ideas that came out of the forum was to host a Road Safety Week. Earlier this week I had the pleasure of launching Road Safety Week with our first-ever road safety minister, Mark Bailey, here at Parliament House. Of course, we had the Commissioner of Police with us, Mike Keating from the Road Policing Command and a number of other hardworking police officers. We also had the Ambulance Service there. The message was clear at this launch: police will be out in force targeting bad driver behaviour and police will not hesitate in taking enforcement action against people who continue to put at risk not only their lives but also the lives of other innocent people by behaving badly behind the wheel. There are road safety events being held right across Queensland this week.

The committee would also be pleased to know that the Queensland Road Safety Awards are being held today in Mackay. These awards recognise and honour the outstanding efforts of individuals and groups who have initiated projects and programs to improve the safety on Queensland roads. The awards are a joint initiative of CARRS-Q and the RACQ and are actively supported by the Queensland Police Service, DTMR and the Motor Accident Insurance Commission. The Palaszczuk government has also recently launched the Safer Roads, Safer Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2015 to 2021 and a two-year action plan from 2015 to 2017. Under the two-year action plan, over 57 initiatives will be implemented across the state focusing on education and engagement, enforcement and technology.

The Queensland Police Service has a vital role to play as part of the strategy and will start by, firstly, investigating expanding automated numberplate recognition technology in police vehicles to target unregistered and unlicensed drivers as they have been overrepresented in crash statistics; secondly, expanding training for road policing officers to better detect and deter broader criminal activities along with enhanced drug-driving operations across Queensland, enforcing double demerit points for second mobile phone offences and continuing high visibility policing operations like Operation Menzel targeting drink-driving; Operation Plow, which targets speeding, drink-driving and distracted driving; and Operation Barrier, which focuses on the Bruce Highway.

In addition to the new initiatives announced in the action plan, the Queensland Police Service will continue to use speed and red-light cameras, random breath testing and roadside drug testing, non-camera police on-road speed enforcement, vehicle impoundment and immobilisation for type 1 and type 2 offences. In addition, the Queensland Police Service Road Policing Command have participated in an operational trial of an integrated body-worn camera and digital management evidence system. This forms part of a formal evaluation being conducted by the Queensland Police Service to deliver on the government's commitment to provide body-worn video to the Queensland Police Service.

The Palaszczuk government supports the work of police 100 per cent in their effort to keep Queenslanders safe on our roads, but we need everyone's help. Road safety is a community responsibility and that is why this week we are urging people to speak up for road safety.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I will go to the member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: Minister, I have a question about police recruitment. I refer to SDS page 4 and the role of the Queensland Police Service in preserving peace and good order. I note the \$28 million set aside in the state budget to deliver 266 extra police officers this financial year, and I ask: can the minister please provide a progress report on the recruitment drive to bolster police numbers in Queensland?

Mrs MILLER: I would like to thank the member for Morayfield for the question. The Palaszczuk government is well on its way to delivering its commitment of an extra 266 new police this financial year. In total, 89 first year constables were recently sworn in to the Queensland Police Service. The new recruits, along with three new police dogs, recently graduated from the Queensland Police Service Academy in Oxley.

Across South-East Queensland, 24 officers have been posted in Brisbane: six officers to the Moreton district, member for Morayfield; another six in Ipswich, member for Ipswich West; five to the Sunshine Coast, member for Kawana; four to Logan; and six officers across the Darling Downs. Eight officers were assigned to Townsville, three in Cairns, two in Mackay, 13 across the Capricornia district and 10 in Wide Bay. As for our police dogs, PD Bertie and his handler, PD Larry and his handler and PD Prue and her handler will be stationed at the Brisbane Dog Squad where they will perform duties as cadaver protection police dog teams.

Since the Palaszczuk government was elected, 247 new police have been sworn in across Queensland and I was in Townsville to assist in the swearing-in ceremony of the police in North Queensland. Queensland's new police officers will be supported in their jobs by a range of measures announced in the budget including nearly 1,000 new and replacement police vehicles; an extra \$20 million over four years for police to tackle organised crime, alcohol fuelled violence and the drug ice; more than \$6 million over three years for the rollout of body-worn video cameras; and \$6 million to continue the police helicopter service in Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

I must say that these helicopters are very, very popular in the community. There is \$11.2 million for the continued operation of the Gold Coast Rapid Action and Patrol Group, up from \$9.2 million under the Newman LNP government, and \$3.9 million for the continued operation of the Townsville Rapid Action and Patrol Group. I have visited both the Gold Coast and the Townsville RAP groups.

I am pleased to advise that planned police recruitment activities are on track to meet our commitment to increase police numbers by 1,100 over four years, and I would encourage people to apply for these positions. This increase in front-line police will enable the Queensland Police Service to commit more officers to proactive policing tasks.

CHAIR: You mentioned the police dogs. What sort of breeds are the dog handlers being engaged with these days?

Mrs MILLER: Member for Ferny Grove and chair of the committee, I love our police dogs, I can tell you. We have various breeds—

Mr BLEIJIE: Talk about the calendars.

Mrs MILLER: I will talk about the calendars in a minute if you would like me to. You can ask me a question about that.

Mr BLEIJIE: I wanted to buy one at the Ekka but there weren't any there.

CHAIR: If you can answer my question that would be great.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, I will answer your question. Thank you very much, Mr Chair. We have several breeds of dogs. They are mainly Alsatis, German shepherds, but I understand we also have a labrador and I think we may also have a cocker spaniel; is that right? Sorry, a beagle. Very close. I can tell you that as one of my duties as police minister there is nothing that I love more than going out to the dog squad at Oxley and seeing those new pups that have been born. I can say to the committee today that another set of pups has been born.

The last set of pups that were born are what we refer to as the W litter. We asked people across Queensland, particularly school-aged children, what they would like to name these police puppies. Of course we were inundated with names. Can I say, Mr Chair, that children name them better. Some of the W names from adults were particularly not suitable. But I will not go there. The next set of puppies will be named the X, Y and Z litter. I am probably letting the people of Queensland know a little bit early

that the Queensland Police Service will be asking the people of Queensland to come up with appropriate names for this new litter very, very soon and then these particular dogs will be given their names. I understand that the Police Service likes to have the names of one syllable if you can because I think it is easier for the handlers when they are going out and doing their work; however, all suitable names will be examined.

The dog handlers absolutely love their police dogs. You can tell that they love them; they live at home with them. At the end of the lives of the police dogs it is very sad for me because I love dogs. I know that the police handlers and their families get very upset, and I would like to inform you that I write personally to the police dog handlers and their families to express my sympathies when police dogs have lost their lives in any way and they are no longer to serve our community. So I place on record my appreciation to the police dog handlers.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I now go to non-government members for their conclusion of today's proceedings.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair. If you could clarify for how long we are going?

CHAIR: We have 11 minutes.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mrs MILLER: Can I just correct the record? Just briefly, member for Kawana, I was right: it was a cocker spaniel, not a beagle. I know my dog breeds.

Mr BLEIJIE: I have a question for the police minister. I seek leave to table a copy of a one-page extract from *Hansard*. I have a copy for you well, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Leave is granted.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am just after the minister's clarification. If she reads the first question and her answer, it is with respect to SDS page 4, departmental overview, services, fairness and integrity and empowered leadership. I want just the minister to confirm she stands by the statement that she made in parliament with respect to the first question that was asked and her answer. I have written to the Clerk about this matter today. I just want her clarification: does she stand by that statement?

Mrs MILLER: Mr Chair, this has nothing to do with the SDS and I would ask your ruling on it.

CHAIR: I am trying to clarify what area of this question on notice you are referring to, member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Chair. The provision I am referring to is the question where the opposition leader has asked the minister if she is aware of any instances where she signed incorrect statements since becoming the Minister for Police. The minister responded, 'I have written to the Clerk on this matter today.' I wanted to clarify if the minister stands by that position.

If I may for the benefit of the committee, I understand there is an Ethics Committee investigation on foot, but this is with respect to the answer the minister made to parliament. It is not about the actual statement to the parliament; it is about whether she stands by the statement that I have just presented.

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, this is a matter before the Ethics Committee now and we are appearing here today examining the Appropriations Bill, therefore, that question is out of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: Commissioner, I refer to page 4 of the SDS with respect to people in the organisation. and I note that you have to your right Deputy Commissioner Barnett. There have been reports in the paper this week that you are looking at a structural change. It was not in the paper, but it has been confirmed to me that you are moving Deputy Commissioner Barnett, who is Specialist Operations at the moment, to another portfolio, either Regional Operations or Strategy, Policy and Performance. You are also moving Deputy Commissioner Pointing to another role.

My concern is that, looking at the Queensland Police Service organisational structure, as Specialist Operations Deputy Commissioner Barnett is responsible for intelligence, counterterrorism and major events. Considering we have just had a terrorist attack in Thailand and the Sydney siege in the Café Lindt, is it an appropriate time to restructure the leadership of the Queensland police organisation, particularly because Mr Barnett is known internationally as a world renowned expert in counterterrorism measures?

Mrs MILLER: I seek the guidance of the chair, please. This is an operational matter of the Commissioner. It does not have anything whatsoever to do with the SDS because it does not have anything to do with the financial commitments of this government to the Queensland Police Service. I would ask you to rule.

Mr BLEIJIE: These officers are paid for out of money that this budget is providing for their employment. The organisational structure I would think is pretty relevant if the police are budgeted from this budget. I think the structure and who serves in what role is pretty relevant. If the minister is saying that she is not paying her police officers that is another matter, but I am sure Mr Barnett receives income that is budgeted from this budget and what he does at his job is quite relevant.

CHAIR: Commissioner, I will have you answer the question subject to not interfering or encroaching on any matters that may affect any operational sensitivities around the Queensland Police Service.

Commissioner Stewart: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for the question, sir. There are many rumours that circulate within the Queensland Police Service on a daily basis, and certainly as you well know I am currently in the process of selecting new assistant commissioners and chief superintendents. Deputy Barnett on my behalf is chairing a panel which is just about to look at the second round of superintendent promotions within the Queensland Police Service.

We are an organisation of almost 15,000 and, like every good large organisation, one of our top priorities is the development of key leadership cadres within the organisation so that if someone were to be hit by a bus, there are people ready to step into those roles. The only way that most large organisations like mine achieve this—particularly uniform service organisations, and the military is probably the best example—is by rotation of people through various functional roles. I am not about to change the structure of the Queensland Police Service, but certainly I have been in consultation with a number of key senior officers at various levels in relation to opportunities for their development and for increasing their skill base. I am blessed in my organisation to have what I think is the finest senior team in the nation.

Mr BLEIJIE: I guess my question is: is Deputy Commissioner Barnett moving from currently Specialist Operations to another field?

Commissioner Stewart: I thank you for the question, and I would like to give you an answer to that because—

Mr BLEIJIE: I am happy to have a yes or no.

Commissioner Stewart: I am on that journey, sir. I would like to point out to you that under the law of Queensland I have specific responsibilities for a whole range of things, and one of those is the correct management and the leadership of our organisation. I believe strongly in developing staff to the best of their ability and to challenge them on a daily basis so that they can work to their potential. That is what I do. I did it under the previous government; I intend to do it under this government.

There is an issue though, sir, and I would ask you to consider this in pressing me for an answer. One of the big issues about our organisation is the need for stability of leadership, and you alluded to that before. I have not yet finalised my decisions or notifications of different placements and different allocations of senior staff. If I were to pre-empt that then potentially it can destabilise the organisation even just for a minute amount of time. As you said, in our current environment, when the security level of Australia is at its highest level and when the security alert level for policing throughout Australia is at its highest level ever, I do not want to leave that gap. So I would ask your indulgence, sir—

Mr BLEIJIE: I will indulge you, thank you, Commissioner. I am sorry to interrupt, but we are quickly running out of time so I will take that answer. I want to ask a question with respect to page 5 of the SDS in relation to the operational capability of the QPS. If a police minister phones a witness in an ongoing investigation, would that be a minister interfering in your office's operational matters?

Mr RYAN: I rise to a point of order. Again we have the member for Kawana asking hypothetical questions.

Mr BLEIJIE: The minister phoned. How can it be a hypothetical when the minister admitted to phoning a key witness? It is not a hypothetical; it is the truth.

Mr RYAN: The way the member for Kawana framed his question was a hypothetical.

Mr BLEIJIE: You are not going to win that, member for Morayfield.

CHAIR: Order! I am listening to a point of order. Member for Morayfield.

Mr RYAN: Chair, standing order 115 provides that a member cannot ask a hypothetical question.

Mr BLEIJIE: The protection continues.

Mr RYAN: The way the member for Kawana worded his question was hypothetical. I ask you to rule it out of order.

CHAIR: I do rule it out of order.

Mr BLEIJIE: Commissioner, thank you. With respect to an ongoing investigation with respect to member of parliament Rick Williams—I refer to page 5 of the SDS in relation to operational capability for the QPS—where is that investigation at, Commissioner? In terms of the investigation, have you ascertained witnesses? It has now been revealed that the police minister actually met with Rick Williams in the middle of this saga. Has the minister now been asked questions with respect to the Rick Williams investigation?

Mr RYAN: I rise to a point of order.

Mrs MILLER: The member for Kawana, who is supposed to have a law degree, is asking the Commissioner of Police direct questions—

Mr BLEIJIE: About the budget.

Mrs MILLER:—about an investigation.

Mr BLEIJIE: That is budgeted for in this estimates.

Mrs MILLER: This is unprecedented, I think, in this parliament and I would ask—

Mr BLEIJIE: What is unprecedented is you not giving answers. What did you ring the witness about?

Mrs MILLER: I would ask you please, Mr Chair—

Mr BLEIJIE: What did you ring the witness about?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana!

Mrs MILLER:—to make your ruling in relation to this matter, because he has asked the Commissioner of Police a direct question in relation to an investigation. I have never heard of this in my time in the parliament.

Mr BLEIJIE: Well, I have never heard of a minister phoning a key witness. I will question the minister: what is an operational matter in terms of your view, Minister?

CHAIR: Member for Kawana, I will ask the commissioner, subject to the details of an investigation that is underway, to attempt, if possible, to answer the question subject to not prejudicing the case on the question that the member for Kawana is asking you.

Commissioner Stewart: Sir, with respect, I think the only way that I can possibly answer that is to say that the investigation is ongoing.

CHAIR: Thank you. That is all I need to hear from you, Commissioner. It being 6.30, I now draw the hearing to a close. As time has now expired—

Mrs SMITH: I want to move a motion, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: No.

Mrs SMITH: Point of order, Chair. I would like to move a motion.

CHAIR: I have closed the meeting and, member, the—

Mrs SMITH: Thank you; no. I would like to move a motion—

CHAIR:—time has now—

Mrs SMITH:—with respect—

Mr BLEIJIE: With respect, Mr Chair, with regard to time, as you indicated earlier, we were running over time. At 6.30 we are still running over time—

CHAIR: As I indicated to you, member for Kawana, you had 11 minutes. That 11 minutes has exhausted and that is why I am drawing the hearing to a close.

Mrs SMITH: And I would like to move a motion—

That the current hearing be extended from 6.30 until 7.30.

CHAIR: Can you just point to me what standing order you are seeking to derive to that conclusion?

Mrs SMITH: Actually, if you go into our estimates manual, it clearly says that I can make a procedural motion to change times as a committee member.

Mr BLEIJIE: Hear, hear!

CHAIR: What is the standing order please?

Mrs SMITH: It is 3.9 of the estimates manual.

CHAIR: We will adjourn very briefly for a short private meeting. Sorry to hold you up.

Mr BLEIJIE: A minister who does not want to answer questions!

Proceedings suspended from 6.31 pm to 6.35 pm

 **CHAIR:** The committee has met and held a private meeting and that brings us to a close with respect to today's proceedings. The time has now expired for consideration of the proposed expenditure within the portfolio of the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and the Minister for Corrective Services. On behalf of the committee, Minister, I thank you and the director-general, CEO and commissioners and other officers for your attendance here this evening. Minister, I remind you that any outstanding answers to the questions taken on notice at today's hearing are to be provided to the research director by close of business tomorrow, which is 5 pm on Friday, 21 August 2015. I do understand you may wish to briefly thank other persons and their advisers as well.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you, Mr Chair. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in the estimates process over the last few weeks. To you, Mr Chair, and to members of the committee: thank you for your contribution. Importantly, I want to place on record my sincere thanks and gratitude to the hundreds of dedicated career public servants in the Public Safety Business Agency, the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service, Queensland Corrective Services and the Inspector-General of Emergency Management's office. These officers are the backbone of Queensland. Without them, things do not get done and very often we overlook their contribution to making our state a better and a safer place.

I want to particularly thank my commissioners: Commissioner of Police, Ian Stewart, and his team and Commissioner of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service, Katarina Carroll, and her team. Their leadership and their expert advice has been greatly appreciated during this estimates process. I also must thank my Chief Executive Officer, Kelvin Anderson, and his team who have worked tirelessly; my Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, David Mackie; the head of Queensland Corrective Services and his team, Deputy Director-General Dr Mark Rallings; as well as the Inspector-General of Emergency Management, Iain MacKenzie, and his team for their advice and guidance. Of course to my ministerial staff: thank you very much for your support, your dedication and the very long hours you have put into this estimates hearing. To my electorate staff, Steve and Trace: thank you as well. Finally to the Parliamentary Services staff, from all of the attendants—Ange and everyone—to the IT gurus and also to the Hansard staff here today: we could not do this without you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That completes the committee's hearings into the matters referred to it by the parliament. The Hansard transcript of today's proceedings will be available online within the next few hours. On behalf of the committee, I thank the officers of the Parliamentary Service for their assistance in today's hearing. I also thank fellow committee members for their work and cooperation in organising and running the hearing today. I thank Hansard as well and the secretariat. I declare this hearing closed. Thank you.

Committee adjourned at 6.39 pm