

TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014

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

Estimates Committee Members

Mrs RN Menkens (Chair)
Mr MA Boothman
Mrs YM D'Ath
Mr PJ Dowling
Mr RG Hopper
Mr MR Latter
Mr MJ Pucci

In Attendance

Hon. J-PH Langbroek, Minister for Education, Training and Employment
Ms S Rice, Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education
Mrs F Crawford, Chief of Staff

Department of Education, Training and Employment

Dr J Watterston, Director-General
Ms G Sinclair, Deputy Director-General, Early Childhood Education and Care
Mr D O'Hagan, Acting Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services
Mr A Black, Assistant Director-General and Chief Finance Officer
Ms P Walton, Deputy Director-General, State Schools
Ms J Schmidt, Chief Executive Officer, TAFE Queensland
Mr G Favell, Assistant Director-General, Skills Reform, Training and Employment

Committee met at 9.00 am

 **CHAIR:** Good morning. Before we start, I ask that all mobile phones be set to silent. Today's hearing is being webcast live, with archived video footage available on the committee's web page progressively throughout the day. Welcome to those people who are tuning in today. For the minister's benefit I point out that we have given permission for photography during the first five minutes. There may be flashlights during the first five minutes only.

The estimates process is an important part of the parliamentary scrutiny of the executive government. The purpose is to support the scrutiny of the proposed budget and the budget related activity of government agencies. Committee members may put questions to the minister, director-general and specified chief executive officers. Today that will be the chief executive officers of the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority and TAFE Queensland.

I now declare this estimates hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee open. I am Rosemary Menkens, the member for Burdekin and chair of the committee. The other committee members here today will be: Mr Ray Hopper MP, the deputy chair and member for Condamine—who is currently held up in traffic but will be here shortly—Mr Peter Dowling MP, the member for Redlands; Ms Yvette D'Ath MP, the member for Redcliffe; Mr Mark Boothman MP, the member for Albert; Mr Michael Latter MP, the member for Waterford; and Mr Michael Pucci MP, the member for Logan.

The committee has resolved that non-committee members be given leave to attend and ask questions during the hearing. At this stage the member for Inala, the Leader of the Opposition, may be joining us at some stage during the proceedings.

We will now examine the budget estimates for the Education, Training and Employment portfolio in the order outlined in the published program. We will consider education until the afternoon tea break and employment and training later this afternoon.

The minister, director-general or CEO may refer questions to advisers. Guidelines for department officials who engage with parliamentary committees are laid out in schedule 8 at the back of the standing orders. We expect all departmental officials appearing today to provide full and honest answers to our questions. Anyone who is unable or unwilling to provide an answer should be prepared to state the reason.

I also remind members that the departmental officials are not here today to give opinions on the merits or otherwise of the policies of government. That is the role of the minister. I also remind witnesses and members that, while the director-general and CEOs maybe directly questioned, only the minister can agree to take a question on notice.

Today's proceedings will be suspended for the following breaks: from 10.15 am to 10.45 am, from 12.00 pm to 1.00 pm and from 2.45 pm to 3.15 pm.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, Mr John-Paul Langbroek, the Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education, Ms Saxon Rice, Director-General Dr Jim Watterston, Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority Director Mr Chris Rider, departmental officers and members of the public to today's hearing.

For the benefit of Hansard, I ask any witnesses who speak to identify themselves before answering a question. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Training and Employment open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement in respect of your portfolio. I remind you that there is a time limit of three minutes for such a statement.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. May I say welcome to all the committee, the secretariat, officers from my department, the assistant minister and my staff. This is very important consideration of the SDS for my Department of Education, Training and Employment for the 2013-14 outcomes and the 2014-15 prospective outcomes. This is something that the government prides itself on. Today we will be speaking in this form for about six hours, which is obviously one hour greater than last year. I think that shows the willingness of the government to outline the achievements in not just this portfolio but all of the portfolios across government. I look forward to questioning from the committee and providing information about any of the specifics in the Service Delivery Statements.

If I may summarise the 2014-15 budget, we have seen a seven per cent increase in terms of value. We are focussing on outcomes of course. It is not just about providing more money. With the growth that we have in state education there is also no doubt that we need to keep putting in more resources to maintain class targets. They are things that the government is committed to. The Education, Training and Employment budget is \$11.8 billion. There will be 761 new teachers and teacher aides. The highlight is that \$66 million has been committed as part of our five-year \$537 million Great Teachers = Great Results action plan. Some \$131 million went to schools last year. The second tranche of funding from the Great Results Guarantee will go out in just a few weeks. It will continue to boost student literacy and numeracy outcomes.

There is \$6 million for additional state schools to become independent public schools as part of our four year election promise. There is \$94 million to provide a smooth transition for schools as year 7 moves to high school in 2015. There will be an extra 2,250 prep teacher aide hours as part of our four-year \$54 million Boosting Prep for our children's future commitment. There is \$4.9 million to increase kindergarten participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Some \$100 million has been allocated as part of our \$300 million investment in clearing Labor's maintenance backlog. There will be 10 new schools through our \$1.8 billion PPP, with \$59 million allocated to this in 2014-15. There is \$615 million to invest in training that will lead to meaningful and sustainable jobs through the 2014-15 VET investment plan. There is \$13 million over three years through the school to trade pathway and the group training organisation additional apprentice bonus initiatives to support our commitment to create 10,000 additional apprenticeships over six years.

I will not go through any more detail. As you mentioned, I have three minutes. I think it is very important to point out to those listening and those who may be watching and those who will read this that the government is absolutely committed to making sure that we get better outcomes in education for our future and present young Queenslanders. We have done that by making sure we deal with the issues we inherited. We are also doing that by this year's budget allocation. We are also going to be planning for the future in September at an education accord summit which all members of the parliament are invited to attend along with parents, teachers and principals. That shows that this government is absolutely focused on the important aspect that we know parents and grandparents want, as well as teachers, principals and students, which is to get the best outcomes in education all the way through from early childhood through school into training and then into employment which will make Queensland a better place into the future.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We will start by examining education. Government members of the committee will take the first questioning slot. I will lead the questioning. Minister, with reference to page 2 of the SDS, the department's strategic outcomes in early years learning include Queensland children being engaged in quality early years programs and making a successful transition to school. Minister, can you please outline how participation in early childhood education and care facilities facilitates a successful transition to schooling?

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Everyone is very aware of the importance of the early years. That is why for the last number of years we have had a massive increase in participation in early childhood programs. It is up from about 27 per cent just a few years ago to 97 per cent in the year just completed.

It is also important to acknowledge that whilst we have put resources into the Great Results Guarantee, which is in schools, we need to get better partnerships between the play based aspects of early childhood programs and the more formal settings of school. Up to now my department has focused a lot, in collaboration with the federal government, on regulating our early childhood programs—that is, making sure that the early years quality framework that talks about making sure that we have the appropriate resourcing in the early childhood area so that children are taught by someone who has qualifications which will help them prepare for schooling is augmented by a better collaboration between early childhood and schooling.

So to that end, as you will see in the SDS, there has been a significant change by the department to add another senior executive—and I will let the director-general speak about that in a minute—so that we just do not just focus on regulating early childhood education we also look at what they are actually doing. We are not in any way trying to change what they are doing in terms of their format. They do not have the same Australian curriculum that we do in schooling. But they certainly have a program that they are proud to work with. We need to make sure that we coordinate that better with schooling.

The director-general will now speak about the senior executive who has been appointed. We are going to be putting more resources into our regions to make sure that we have more support in these early childhood programs.

Dr Watterston: Thank you, Minister. That you for the opportunity to elaborate on a topic which is really important both to me in terms of my background but also to the department in terms of the renewal program we are undertaking. You will be aware that all government agencies have been through a renewal process. It has been a great opportunity for the Department of Education, Training and Employment to look at our priorities. A major priority for us, based on the neuroscience and our understanding of early development, is our early childhood services.

That department came across to us about six years ago. It even sat separate—that is, in terms of it being across the road in a different building. We have worked really hard to highlight the opportunity there is for us to improve student outcomes right through all phases of schooling by investing and focusing as a priority on early childhood.

As the minister stated, we have enhanced early childhood delivery within our department by creating a deputy director-general position for early childhood to not only demonstrate its status to our stakeholders and to our providers but also to renew our service delivery within the department. Part of that work is working with the non-government sector. Using our early childhood delivery, within the regions we have decided to engage through our primary schools with local providers, albeit that we do not have direct line management or line control in that area.

The Darling Downs is a region where they have done some fantastic work. A lady by the name of Rebecca Hand has developed some professional learning for all school principals and any stakeholders and non-government providers in the early childhood area who would like to come

along. It talks about how we collaborate and share professional learning within schools for those non-government providers in the early childhood sector so we can improve transitions from those providers into our school system.

As we know, a lot of the issues that are identified in the early years if known about in schools can breakdown some of the barriers in terms of entry and rediscovering and assessing students for early development. We are now going to scale that program up through seconding people out of the Darling Downs to work across the whole state to be able to provide support and guidance for our primary schools to enhance those pathways and to develop that community capital and make sure that we are all working to the same ends.

We are trying to establish our department as the department for lifelong learning. We do have discrete sectors. We do have early childhood. We have schools. We have the VET space. We do some work in higher education. We need to link them much better. The work that we are now doing with the early childhood area and our schools is the most formative part of that link. So I think having a deputy director-general reinvigorating our regional services and then asking our principals to invest in community development are three really big priorities that will help us to achieve better outcomes right through the system.

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

Mr BOOTHMAN: With reference to pages 6 and 15 of the SDS, it is clear there has been a very significant increase in the number of children enrolled in kindy in Queensland. Can you please outline how measures to increase enrolments in early childhood programs benefit kids in the Albert electorate?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. As I mentioned in the previous answer we have a much greater proportion of Queensland children participating in a kindergarten program for at least one hour per week in the year before school. It has grown from 29 per cent in 2008 to 97.4 per cent in 2013. These results are based on data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. We have also achieved the third highest level of participation in a kindergarten program for 600 hours per year in the year before full-time school of 94.8 per cent, which is well above the national average of 82 per cent.

So we want to make sure—it is our strategy to ensure, as the director-general just mentioned—that Queensland children have access to a kindergarten program in the year before full-time school. We have a national partnership agreement with the Australian government, but we know that more needs to be done to increase participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and vulnerable and disadvantaged children. That is outlined in the SDS.

We have strong strategies to support these and I have already mentioned a couple of them. I will let the deputy director-general, Gabrielle Sinclair, outline a couple more. Some of the things that we are going to do is create additional kindergarten places in areas of need and subsidies to support kindergarten programs and affordable access for all families. We want to specifically target programs to support access for vulnerable, disadvantaged, rural and remote Indigenous children and enhance the quality standards of kindergarten programs; increase family and community awareness of the importance of the early years in childhood development, which means working with families to point out to them the importance of doing this for the sake of their own children; and also engagement by working with families and communities, getting them to engage with the diverse range of services in the sector.

There is no doubt that kindy programs create a stimulating and nurturing educational environment for young Queenslanders. Through kindy programs children can develop their physical, social, intellectual, language and emotional abilities. They are supported to develop a love of learning and become better prepared for successful lifelong learning. Gabrielle, the deputy director-general, might like to add something to that.

Ms Sinclair: Thanks very much, Minister. In addition to the strategies the minister has mentioned, we are also concentrating on looking at supporting families and children from the zero to three age group, because we know that, if we connect with families early, they are more likely to continue that close connection with us through to kindergarten and then, as the director-general mentioned, into schooling. So what we are trying to do—and we are working very hard with the sector—is to increase the number of child and family hubs, particularly in communities of high need where we might have a high proportion of vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

We are also continuing to deliver the children and family centres. There are 10 of those in Queensland in areas of high need and really focusing on parents as first teachers and making sure that parents are well supported in understanding the developmental needs of their children. As the

director-general mentioned, we are very keen to make sure that all of the substantial amount of research done in neuroscience in the development of a child's early years is well known. We are continuing, of course, with the very highly successfully Kindy Counts marketing and communication program. Lastly, I would like to mention that we regularly provide information to families through child and family hubs and the children and family centres about the health needs of their children and working very closely with the department of health to make sure that the families access a one-stop shop in terms of everything that they need, particularly in those early years, and then, of course, into kindergarten.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr LATTER: Minister, the increase in the number of children enrolled in an early childhood program in Queensland is certainly commendable. However, I refer to page 15 of the SDS, which states that only 79.9 per cent of Indigenous children were enrolled in an early childhood education program. I appreciate that you have just gone to some length to explain how you intend to address that, but perhaps you might explain how investments of up to \$4.8 million in the current budget in additional funding will not just increase kindergarten participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children but perhaps what some of the practical benefits of this increased attendance might be?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. As I have already outlined in my first two answers, our commitment to all young Queenslanders is absolute. That is why, whilst we acknowledge that we want to make sure that every Queensland child has access to a quality early childhood education program, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has increased to 78 per cent but it has not met our target of 95 per cent. As the deputy director-general just mentioned, the children and family centres that we have opened, again as part of a joint Queensland and Australian government commitment under a national partnership, has seen the director-general and me travel to Doomadgee and Mornington Island to open two of those centres. Seventy-five million dollars has been invested in Queensland to establish these centres in 10 communities. That is all part of having parents in those communities work with local workers who work in the children and family centres to welcome their children from a very, very young age so that we can become aware of all of the issues that the deputy director-general just mentioned—about getting families aware of the importance. Everyone has the natural expectation, given that they may be facing other challenges in their lives, that even in the preschool years it is important for their children to get involved, whether it is health or education, and that these things tie together. So the centres are located in Cairns, Doomadgee, as I have mentioned, Ipswich, Logan, Mackay, Mareeba, Mornington Island, Mount Isa, Palm Island and Rockhampton. We are going to be able to support the continuation of these centres. That is something that is obviously going to be of great help there.

We are also extending the health care card subsidy under the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kindergarten children. We are extending and expanding the Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Early Childhood program. So we support services that provide culturally inclusive learning. These are very, very important matters for many people in rural and regional Queensland—in these far-flung areas. We want to make sure that families encounter a welcoming early education program that encourages them to stay and remain engaged in learning.

We have established seven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement support officers located in regional offices to facilitate the access, participation and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait families and children in kindergarten programs. We provide the services in the prekindergarten grants programs, with access to additional funds for brokerage. This enables these services to offset costs identified as barriers for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to enrol in kindergarten programs.

So can I say to the member for Waterford and to all members of the committee that it is a long journey from participation rate that had 29 per cent of children in Queensland in these programs in 2008. There is still a way to go, especially for some of those groups that I have mentioned, but we are absolutely committed to making sure that we do it.

Mr DOWLING: Minister, distance can operate to limit the ability of families to access kindy in the same way as those of us living in the cities and towns. With reference to page 4 of the Service Delivery Statements, can you please outline how investment in e-kindy and other innovative programs is ensuring that children in rural and remote regions are able to access a quality kindergarten program?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the member for the question. Just as we have spoken about one aspect of disadvantage, or the challenges that are faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, so is being in rural or remote, far-flung remote areas. To that end, when I became the minister the department was developing e-kindy so that, whilst it may be for a relatively small number of children, the parents who are involved in the Isolated Children's Parents Association, or the School of Distance Education Alliance, were just, and are just, as passionate about making sure that their children receive the same opportunities as children in the metropolitan areas.

So e-kindy is something that the government has developed and delivered. We are delivering it to 182 children. It includes children isolated by distance, with a medical condition, or part of travelling or itinerant families. It allows children to take part in teacher delivered web lessons and interactive online and in-home activities. They may also have the opportunity to interact face to face with other children and their teacher.

I have been out to Coorparoo Secondary College, or the old Coorparoo State High School, where a lot of our distance education is based. I have seen e-kindy in action, where you see a teacher with headphones on interacting with these students. It is great to see that children in rural and remote Queensland are still able to benefit from programs such as e-kindy. The communities of Aramac and Dulacca are providing access to the e-kindy program using spare classrooms at the local state school. This has allowed the children access to a teacher-led program and helps to transition the children to school. An amount of \$1.2 million has been provided to 11 organisations to deliver transport solutions, which will increase access and participation in rural and remote locations and to disadvantaged children.

Let us not forget, though, can I say to members of the committee, that we have established or we are in the process of establishing 19 new kindergarten services that are separate to e-kindy—these are in rural and remote areas—in recent years, including new services at Mitchell, Cunnamulla, Miles, Chinchilla, Emerald, Mareeba, Peak Crossing, Blackwater, Marion, Glenden, Calen, and Aurukun. Approximately \$2 million is supporting children with a disability to participate in a kindy program. That is a threefold increase on 2010 funding levels. So we are absolutely committed to providing access for all and supporting children with diverse needs.

CHAIR: Thank you, minister. I will now call the member for Redcliffe.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you, Chair, and good morning, Minister.

CHAIR: Good morning.

Ms D'ATH: I would like to just stick with the theme of early childhood education and take you to page 18 of the SDS. Minister, can you please advise what is the status of the current review of the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. This is something that this state is continuing to negotiate with the federal government about. The last federal Labor government extended, with Kate Ellis as the responsible minister, to Peter Garret and then Bill Shorten, as the senior minister, the national partnership for 18 months and that expires at the end of this year. Given that Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria are responsible for about 70 per cent to 75 per cent of the children who are benefiting from this, the ministers from New South Wales, Victoria and I have written to the federal government and we continue to work with them to make sure that we, hopefully, can get that extended. The Australian government has indicated that it is negotiating with state and territory governments on ongoing funding of universal access. The review of the NP is due and it is also being assessed in the context of the outcomes of the national Commission of Audit and Productivity Commission inquiry into child care. We want funding certainty for Queensland families and services. We have been strongly advocating for the continuation of funding. The importance of early childhood education is well recognised and we will continue to work hard to increase opportunities for every child to attend a kindergarten program with a priority focus, as we have already mentioned this morning, on increasing participation by disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

Not all targets have been achieved. As I say, the 97.4 per cent represents a strong improvement—up from 77 per cent in 2012 and 29 per cent in 2008. We have already mentioned this morning that the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait children is 77.9 per cent and the proportion from low socioeconomic backgrounds is 85.5 per cent. Both measures are short of the 95 per cent target. In 2013-14, Queensland received \$68 million under the national partnership. In 2014-15, the

national partnership provides for \$49.2 million. So while Queensland has made strong progress, in particular 95 per cent participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and vulnerable and disadvantaged children will be a challenge.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. You have identified that the success so far has come about as a consequence of the universal access funding, which was a federal Labor funding initiative, and the importance of reaching those targets. The present partnership guarantees each child 15 hours a week of early childhood education in the year before compulsory schooling. Based on your comments about the various states writing to the Commonwealth, the Victorian government has now guaranteed at least 10 hours irrespective of Commonwealth funding. South Australia has also made a similar guarantee of 12 hours of early childhood education. Can you please advise the committee, if the national partnership agreement is not renewed by the Commonwealth government, what level of early childhood education will be guaranteed by the Queensland government beyond the 2014-15 financial year?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question and just say that we continue to negotiate with the federal government about that. It is a partnership that expires at the end of December and we will make the appropriate decisions, obviously, well before then, because we want to make sure that there is certainty. But when it comes to speculating about how many hours we are going to provide, that is not something that is the subject of the SDS and that is not something that I can provide here. But we will continue to work with the federal government.

It is obvious that, having provided this service in partnership with the former federal government, it is not something that we anticipate will be something that we could then say we are going to go back to 29 per cent of children in Queensland, again, being part of these programs.

Given that we have all acknowledged the importance of the early years, it is something that we are absolutely determined to keep providing. I am confident we are going to do it but it is a matter of working through the appropriate measures with the federal government to do it in a way that does not get down to the specifics of the moment of talking about the number of hours per week but to say we are committed to making sure we keep providing it. The director-general may be able to provide some more details.

Dr Watterston: Can I just add that, in terms of the way we have funded early childhood through this universal access partnership, we still have \$63.7 million in deferrals. So whatever the outcome is later this year, our department is well placed to be able to transition to the new environment. The funding that we have available for at least the next 12 months will enable us to commit to plans, as the minister said, to be able to maintain those remarkable figures and to build on the quality.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, can I just clarify this. Has the Commonwealth indicated that they will not make a decision until the Productivity Commission inquiry that is going on has completed? Have they given you a time frame?

CHAIR: Member for Redcliffe, is that actually relevant to the SDS?

Ms D'ATH: The SDS specifically identifies that there is no commitment of Commonwealth funds beyond December 2014 and that will create difficulties in continuing the early childhood development education funding. So there is a specific acknowledgement in the SDS about the Commonwealth not committing beyond December and what impact that might have on the budget.

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, I am happy to answer the question. The now Liberal government said in opposition that they wanted to have a Productivity Commission inquiry into child care, so that would be helping to inform Sussan Ley, who is the minister responsible now. She said that all the time. That is why all the states have been advocating. We have been doing this at ministerial councils, and some of the honourable member's colleagues from other states can confirm this—there is no secret here. All the states want to see it continued.

We continue to work with the federal government about it. They have said that the Productivity Commission is going to help to inform some of the decisions that they make, so we look forward to getting the ongoing commitment from the federal government so that we can make sure we keep providing these very, very important services. It was the former federal Labor government of course which said there was going to be an end to this particular universal access national partnership and that is expiring in December. It was not the government that is now in Canberra that said it; it was Kate Ellis, who is now the overarching education shadow minister.

So the federal Liberal government came in and they have inherited the situation. They have inherited a situation not dissimilar to the one in this state that we inherited in 2012. They said that, before they go ahead and promise more money or continue the national partnership—whilst it has been very valuable and I certainly advocate for it, as part of the state, after seeing the benefits it is providing to our children—it is important that they get all of the information so they can plan appropriately.

Ms D'ATH: Sorry to interrupt, Minister, but my question was quite specific. Has the Commonwealth indicated that they will not make a decision about any future funding until the Productivity Commission inquiry has come down, and have they given you a date of when that will come down?

Mr LANGBROEK: I do not see that that is part of the SDS. I am trying to be very open with the member to say that the federal government have said—and this is from ministerial councils—that they are waiting for the results of the Productivity Commission, which is due to come down pretty soon, and that will help to inform their decision.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, I now take you to the capital program in the SDS. Can you please advise if the department has taken any preparations to review the school viability assessment process?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I will have someone from the department come and speak about capital works in terms of that particular aspect in a moment. I can tell you that when it comes to viability we said that we made the difficult decision to close six schools last year. The former government closed about seven a year over 20 years and we said there will be no more schools closed in this term. So, no, there have been no specific changes about the viability assessment that the honourable member asked about. I will pass over to Dave O'Hagan, who is the acting deputy director-general.

Mr O'Hagan: In terms of school viability, there has been no review of the assessment process mainly because the government has made a commitment that there will be no school closures in this term so we have not looked at that school viability assessment process at all. We do constantly monitor school enrolments obviously and some schools have self-closed, if you like, in the past, irrespective of there being a viability assessment, and that is if there are no students at a particular school. I can confirm that the minister is correct: we have not looked at that certainly since I have been in the role, and my predecessor can confirm that as well.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. Chair, can I table the following document, which is a draft briefing note prepared by the deputy director-general of the corporate services division, Department of Education, Training and Employment, in order to review the school viability assessment procedure by the end of term one 2014. The normal review period was scheduled for 2015 but the draft briefing note makes a recommendation to the minister to bring that forward to 2014. Minister, has any review occurred as a consequence of that recommendation by the department? I am happy to wait for that document to find its way to you.

CHAIR: I would suggest that we break for a few moments while we get copies of that document so that members of the committee are fully aware of it.

Proceedings suspended from 9.36 am to 9.41 am

CHAIR: We will now resume proceedings.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I can advise the honourable member that this is something that was a process that had not been happening in my department when I became the minister. The two previous ministers—Cameron Dick and Geoff Wilson—had basically said that we were not going to have any ability to look at schools with a view to saying whether they were still viable. The department in 2012 came to me with a note that said that they thought, based on some sort of viability criteria that they had worked on, there were up to 50 schools. That is something that I of course ruled out of hand immediately, and that is where we ended up with the process that said, 'Let's have a look at the viability of schools.' It is appropriate to do that when you have an \$18 billion portfolio.

So we did that, and that is where we came to that decision that I have already mentioned where we closed six schools at the end of 2013. We have made appropriate arrangements for all of those students in all of those schools, notwithstanding it was a very, very difficult decision. Also that happened in light of the fact that the former Labor government closed an average of seven schools a year over 20 years, although they did not do that of course for the last couple of years when it became too electorally difficult for them to do so.

Bearing that in mind, we said very clearly—and I will continue to say this because I have heard that people are going around the state frightening people about prospective school closures—that we closed six schools last year and we are not closing any more in this term. So that means that any draft that the member may have tabled as part of this question is not something that was signed off by me and it is nothing to do with any prospective closures because there will be none in this term.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. For the benefit of the community, this particular document will not be published until people's names have been removed.

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, I might just ask the director-general to expand a bit on that. He can provide the background to something that the member has asserted as being something that may have been done. Given it has been done by the department and I have never sighted it, it would be appropriate for the director-general to expand.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Dr Watterston: You may or may not be aware that I started in the role in April 2013. The criteria for the viability assessment was set so I went through the process as a new director-general. Discussion occurred along the way, and it would appear that this briefing note has been developed as a draft. It was not progressed through to my office, nor was it progressed from there into the minister's office. I can understand why the draft was created, because there was constant scrutiny around the process making sure as a department that we were communicating well and certainly keeping all stakeholders involved. I do not see anything sinister in the draft being created but it was not an opportune time for us to review the viability assessment process, bearing in mind that it was a new process that had been set up so we did not progress.

CHAIR: Thanks, Dr Watterston.

Mr O'Hagan: Just to add to that, you can see by the document number at the top, the reference number '13/' means 2013. I just confirmed with my office that that came up in a draft to the deputy director-general and it was not progressed. So neither the DG nor the minister has seen that.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, can you advise whether you have directed the department to either prepare a school viability assessment prior to the schedule of May 2015 or asked the department to prepare a round of school closures immediately after the next election?

Mr LANGBROEK: No. I can confirm that I have not.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, can I refer you to the Queensland Schools Planning Commission's first report. On page 8 it identifies that in their view there is significant spare capacity in the Brisbane Metropolitan North area, and it goes on to recommend that the state Catholic and independent schooling sectors monitor and conduct a detailed analysis of current and future network needs. Minister, can you advise if such a detailed analysis has been undertaken?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. When it comes to the Schools Planning Commission, it is something that we brought in again for the first time—it had not been done before—simply because there needed to be a better process of planning for new schools. What that has led to is that in 2014 we have not opened a state school in Queensland. That is quite unbelievable when you think that we have nearly 520,000 students in the system.

Last year we had the first round of maps released by the Schools Planning Commission led by Bob Quinn, a former state education minister, to talk about the growth in certain areas. Of course we looked at Brisbane north, we looked at Townsville and we looked at Caloundra south. From that the question the honourable member asked really just expands on what has been identified by the Schools Planning Commission to make sure that we get all three sectors in together and we work together to make sure that we do plan for the future. That is exactly what the Schools Planning Commission was all about.

So when the member asks about a specific plan that will be developed by the state and the non-state sectors, the Catholic and independent sectors, the work that is being by the Schools Planning Commission will underpin the ongoing work that will happen with those discussions with local councils and government agencies as well, including local government and Treasury, to make sure that we get everyone in the room together to make sure that we plan appropriately, not just for Brisbane Metropolitan North. But that may be why the honourable member is asking that question, because that was one of the first areas identified in last year's maps. We have subsequently announced more maps. But in the high growth areas they are the maps that were released last year. So I am not sure if that answers the member to her satisfaction, but I am happy to answer another question if you want to ask me one.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I will now go to the member for Logan.

Mr PUCCI: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, Minister. With reference to pages 6 and 15 of the SDS, it is clear that there has been a significant increase in the number of children enrolled in kindy in Queensland. Can you please outline how measures to increase enrolments in early child programs have benefitted kids in the electorate of Logan?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I would highlight that whether it is in Logan or some of the other areas that we have spoken about this morning, these early childhood programs are absolutely vital. The government has shown a commitment to the early years not just through early childhood kindergarten programs, but also through the Great Results Guarantee that we have been rolling out throughout this year, \$131 million. I know that in the honourable member's electorate, and as every member here would attest, we are all proud of who our kids are. We want them to be the best that they can be, and getting them off to a great early start is so important. When I travel to our approximately 2,600 early childhood providers, not all of them are involved in the provision of kindergarten; over 1,000 of them are in long day care centres and in stand-alone kindys. That really adds to the mantra in my department of 'from crayon to career', When kids first pick up what is basically not curriculum based, but a play based guidance system, that is the format that we know makes such a difference to these young children. We want to make sure that we keep supporting them right across the state. The Director-General and I and other members of the executive regularly get to travel to these places and we see the great effects that it is having.

As I have already mentioned this morning, we want to make sure we do more in areas where children suffer from particular vulnerabilities coming from areas of disadvantage. I do not go to too many places where people do not think they should be getting some sort of assistance as well. Sometimes there is a perception that those areas of disadvantage are only in the far-flung areas of the state. That is not necessarily the case. Sometimes the perceptions about what happens in the Torres Strait islands or in the cape or on the gulf actually occur around us as well. That happens for a lot of those students, whether they are Pacifica or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Of the 50,000 children in the school system, about 80 per cent of them are around us here in the metropolitan area. So I can reassure the committee of the government's intention to make sure we keep providing these services right across the state, and I will hand over to the Director-General for some details.

Dr Watterston: As we have mentioned a number of times, and the Minister has just talked about it, across all electorates there has been a remarkable improvement in the inclusion of students in early childhood programs. But we do not think that is enough, and as a department we are certainly working very hard. I alluded to that in my first answer when I talked about the upgrade in status of the early childhood directorate within our department—in fact, in creating it as a directorate. It has already been established by the Minister and through other questions that disadvantaged students and Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander students are still lagging in terms of their participation. So to that end we are creating additional kindergarten places in areas of need. We are providing subsidies to support kindergarten programs and affordable access for all families and certainly targeting programs to those vulnerable students the Minister just identified in those disadvantaged rural and remote and Indigenous locations.

We are certainly working hard to enhance the standards of kindergarten programs. You will be aware that there is a quality regulation now. We are going around and certainly inspecting those programs and creating feedback to upgrade them. But it is not just about the facilities and the opportunities provided; we really need to work hard now on the quality of the provision—the 'pedagogy' we call it in the primary school situation—and making sure that there are outcomes being achieved. So as I have said a number of times, we have achieved the first remarkable goal of getting participation, but really we now need to make sure that those service providers are offering the best possible opportunity and best start.

There is a lot of work for our department to look at that quality and try and assist non-government providers in a supportive way to be able to make sure that those minimum acceptable standards are going to contribute to a lifetime of success. Increasing family and community awareness is also another big issue for us, and we have worked very hard through that department. As we all know, the best way to raise a child, as Hillary Clinton stated through an old African proverb, is by the village contributing. So families and—

Mr LANGBROEK: *It Takes a Village.*

Dr Watterston: *It Takes a Village*. I was stumbling over that. Thank you for your great assistance. I can always rely on the Minister to help me out. It does take a village. It takes a village to get this question answered as well. And increasing those opportunities for parents to be involved in those programs I think is absolutely fundamental. It is a family enterprise, and that is at the heart of the quality work that we are doing to make sure that this is both a community and a family enterprise. As we said before, there are a lot of good strategies being put in place to assist in this regard.

CHAIR: Thank you, Dr Watterston. Minister, I know you have addressed quite an amount of this particular question. The number of national partnerships with the Australian government that funded early childhood education services is ending shortly. Is there anything extra that you would like to add with reference to pages 4 and 9 of the SDS outlining how the Queensland government is continuing to work with the federal government to support the delivery of quality education and care services in Queensland in light of the reduction of the Commonwealth funding?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I think the fact that we have had this question from nearly everyone, including opposition members, really just shows the importance of these programs to Queenslanders. I think it is also important to acknowledge that whilst we have had this national partnership, we have also done a lot of renovation and refurbishment. I would think that nearly every member here will have been to some of their local kindergartens, and in my electorate I have certainly been to the Broadbeach C&K which my children attended. Burleigh is another one that I went to, but I have been to them in Mackay as well. As I say, I am sure local members can all attest to the fact that they have passionate local communities with often voluntary committees, and I served on one of those committees when my children were at the appropriate age. It gave me an insight into the fact that you have passionate local committees and they deserve to have appropriate facilities. In the case of the Broadbeach C&K, it is 50 years old. One of the original teachers was at the refurbishment announcement when we had the opening, and it was wonderful to see someone there from basically 1964 who had been one of the original teachers. Those facilities have benefitted around the state, and I think over 150 programs have benefitted from this \$8.85 million renovation and refurbishment program.

There is an Essential Upgrades Grant Program of \$2.854 million, and again I have been to programs around the state where they were able to get whiteboards or interactive TVs—all of the things that can assist in these programs to help children get a great early start. But I do not think we should get away from the importance of getting parents and the community involved. Whilst we are very appreciative of professional organisations or NGOs like C&K and Good Start and the organisations that are assisting to provide these programs, we also need to have parental involvement.

That is something that we need to have in Indigenous communities as well, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as parents in our school communities. That is something that as a government we are trying to pass on to communities. We want to have parental involvement. Many people have the expectation that children are going to come to school and they are going to be taught all of the things, including something as basic as speech, manners and toilet training. That is not the school's responsibility now. That is why at the early childhood stages it is very important to have parental involvement, and if there is ever a time when you are going to get parental involvement, it is in those early childhood programs. The government remains committed to working with these particular groups and these programs to make sure we provide the best for our children, as I have said, across the state.

As we have seen through the rigorous questioning that we have had this morning about a program that expires at the end of December, the Director-General has already pointed out that we have the ongoing resourcing to make sure we can maintain it for a year. We want to make sure that this program does continue beyond that so that we do not go back to the situation we had in the past. As a teacher said to me at a forum in Toowoomba last year, 'We get parents who come along who expect prep to do it all.' We are talking here about pre-prep programs, and you can make challenges for teachers when they get children into their prep programs that have not done the kindy or pre-prep programs and yet they are mixed in with children who have done the prep programs. Sometimes it is the children who may need the assistance the most who would get the benefit from the pre-prep or kindy program. That is why the government has a strong plan to make sure we deliver to those communities that we have mentioned today. Many of those people are in yours and my electorates.

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

Mr BOOTHMAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, it is clear that early childhood education and services are certainly getting students on the right path going forward. With reference to page 4 of the SDS, can you please update the committee on the progress of consultation with stakeholders to develop a new five-year early childhood strategy for Queensland early childhood education and care services?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This adds a little to what we spoke about earlier and the Director-General mentioned this. In the early stages of this national partnership if we were going to provide early childhood education to more Queenslanders, we had to make sure that they were doing the appropriate things. That was regulating. But the Deputy Director-General, who I will ask to put some meat on the bones of this topic, has been put into the position of saying that we want to do more than just regulate.

We need to make sure we coordinate more of what is happening in prep or kindergarten and in early childhood services to coordinate with our schools. To that end, we have developed this new five-year early childhood strategy to make sure that quality early childhood remains a priority for every family in the Queensland government. The Premier and the government have asked me to work with service providers, early childhood educators, schools and families to co-design a new five-year action plan that will build on the last decade of reforms in the sector and improve lifelong learning outcomes for every child. Before I hand over to Gabrielle Sinclair, I want to reassure anyone who may be reading this that this should not be open to misrepresentation or misinterpretation of us, the Department of Education, Training and Employment, trying to get into the non-Australian curriculum of prep. I would appreciate it if the deputy director-general could give some more detail. The early interpretation publicly was that schools should be school, and prep should be kindy or prep and please do not make it school. I can understand those providers being concerned that we might prospectively be trying to come down into their sector to drive school outcomes from something that is not a school. I will hand over to the director-general and then the deputy director-general.

Dr Watterston: I will just speak briefly before the deputy director-general speaks. It is a really good issue to raise and the minister has addressed it. I just want to take it a little bit further because, in creating a new directorate in our department for early childhood, it was unclear to our stakeholders and non-government providers as to what the role of the department would be in that coordination. The initial communication probably explored a little bit about who does what and where is the mandate here? This five-year strategy that we are creating is about the village—the statement that I stumbled over before. It is about bringing the village together. We are not the dominant player here, but we are the one entity that can coordinate all of the diverse stakeholders to be able to bring about the outcomes that Queensland needs. We have mentioned it a number of times—and I will not labour it—that from the strong evidence that comes out of the neuroscience research it is clear to us that the earlier you can address cognitive needs in young people, the better and more successful they are going to be throughout life. We have to co-construct this strategy with our stakeholders and with all of the people in the field making sure that we are all on the same page, that we understand what the curriculum needs are, what the play based activity is and what the quality of facilities are and how we can transition right through to employment and a successful life. This is a really unique opportunity for us to bring together a disparate group of people who have all been contributing significantly in this landscape to now work on a common agenda and try to bring the parts that we all play to the centre so that we can contribute in a way such that the sum of the parts is greater than the whole. I will hand over to the deputy director-general to talk about the specifics. It is a wonderful opportunity and we have great engagement from all of the players in the field.

Ms Sinclair: I should start by saying that, as the minister has indicated, over the last five or six years we have had a national reform agenda that has been very strong for the future. That has included, of course, things like making sure that access is affordable for all families and, secondly, making sure that the quality of the programs are nationally driven and are consistent right across Australia. All of the research, of course, indicates that it is no good sending a child to an early childhood service unless there is a quality component. We are already starting to see through the OECD that children at the age of 15, according to the PISA results, do better if they have attended a quality early childhood education and care program. If they spend one year, it is significant in terms of their outcomes. But if they spend two years in an early childhood education and care program that is quality assured, they do even better at the age of 15. Our national reforms have been very strong and they are continuing.

The second is that the minister said that he wanted a five-year action plan for Queensland families and Queensland providers. So in December 2013 we held a three-day program with all service providers and we asked them what do they need—because it is a private sector delivering

early childhood education and care services in Queensland—to give them direction and to give them support to continue that affordable access and the quality. Since December we have been working very hard with the sector to make sure that we are focusing the priorities in the right areas. For example, for the workforce action plan, we are working very hard with them, and the minister has just approved a consultation paper be released to services asking: what assistance do you need to make sure your workforce—your early childhood educators and early childhood teachers—in the sector is well supported? As part of that new action plan the government will consider a new workforce action plan from 2015 to 2018.

We are also looking at, as the minister and the director-general have mentioned this morning, how do we support families who are the most vulnerable and the most disadvantaged? What is it that we need to provide to those families and to assist the services to make sure that we reach the national target of 95 per cent participation? As I mentioned earlier, what we are trying to do is to start and look at what do families need from zero to three? What do families and services need from three to five and what can schools do, as the director-general mentioned, to reach out to families and services to make sure that we support the families and the services to provide quality early childhood education and care? Part of that, of course, is the national census that Queensland contributes to every three years on the Australian Early Development Index. That is due to be undertaken again next year. We are working very hard with services and with schools to make sure that we are able to participate in that census, which is due between May and July of next year so that we get really good data about the domains in which children are vulnerable. We know that to be efficient and effective we have really got to target those early childhood domains and make sure that services and schools are able to address the most vulnerable needs in terms of the assistance that families might need, as the director-general said and as the minister referred to, in the domains of language, early literacy and preparing them to be successful all through their lives and to address the health needs that they may have through the child and family hubs and the children and family centres.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I just point out that was Gabrielle Sinclair, Deputy Director-General and she referred to PISA, which is the Program for International Student Assessment, not 'pizza'.

CHAIR: We would not have thought that. Thank you. I now call the member for Condamine.

Mr HOPPER: Good morning, Minister. Sorry I was late. I was caught up in traffic. While we are on the subject—and I appreciate what you are doing to early learning—I had the pleasure of opening a kindergarten in Dalby only two weeks ago. Their biggest concern was that in the federal budget there have been massive cuts and free kindy has been taken away for healthcare holders and the unemployed. What are you doing to address that?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I reject some of the assertions that the honourable member has made. We have opened the new kindy, and I cannot speak about the specifics of particular people in that service, but I can assure the honourable member that any change that may have come out of the federal government would not have come out of the budget that was just announced in May. There would be no programs that people will be missing out on this year. Any changes to funding would be things that have happened over the last year, and I have already mentioned to the honourable member for Redcliffe that some of the cuts we have had in the national partnership came from the federal Labor government that extended the national partnership in a reduced form that will subsequently expire at the end of this year. If the member has particular queries about people in those services who are missing out, we have just had the deputy director-general pointing out that if not having the resources to be able to go is something that will stop people from going—and affordability is certainly an issue. However, for healthcare cardholders and people like that who are not normally in receipt of such benefits I would not have thought there would be an issue. I am happy to get more detail from the honourable member and follow up on that. We are already saying—and I am not sure if the honourable member was here when I mentioned—that it was in his region of Condamine and Toowoomba and areas like that where a schoolteacher said to me that because of some of the challenges for people in terms of affordability they do send their kids to school expecting prep to do it all. We just heard the deputy director-general say that there is no doubt there is going to be a difference between a child who has been in an early childhood program compared to someone who has not been in a program at all. I know that some of our prep teachers face great challenges with the social interaction of some of the young students who come in prep. These are the challenges that teachers have always faced, whether it is in grade 1 or in prep, but we need to make sure that all parents are supported to make sure they can get their kids to a kindy program.

Mr HOPPER: Looking through the Service Delivery Statements—

Mr LANGBROEK: Anywhere specific or just looking through?

Mr HOPPER: If you listen to the end of my question—

Mr LANGBROEK: I am sorry.

Mr HOPPER:—you might understand what I am saying. Why, apart from a nod to e-kindly, is there no mention of the challenges of rural and remote education in the department's Service Delivery Statements?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. E-kindly is the acknowledgement by the department and has been for some time, developed by our Brisbane School of Distance Education at Coorparoo by our education writers to make sure that we could provide these programs. I know the honourable member was a little late. We spoke about e-kindly earlier on this morning. It is providing kindergarten programs for children in some of our most rural and remote areas—for 182 kids this year. It was developed at great expense, but that is not something we begrudge; it is something we have done so children can get those benefits. Apart from that, we continue to offer that to people who are either associated with schools of distance education or the Isolated Children's Parents Association. We are always doing as much as we can to support them. We supported them with extra resourcing for IT needs as well. When it comes to some more detail, if you are asking about e-kindly or the children in those rural and remote areas, I will ask the deputy director-general to elaborate.

Ms Sinclair: We have a very strong focus on rural and remote families and children and that has been one of our priorities over the last five years. As the minister said, we have Bound for Success schools that deliver prep programs in rural and remote areas to 35 different communities. That is focusing very much on making sure that the most vulnerable children in these very remote and rural areas have access to a prep kindy program. As the minister said, we have also provided 10 children and family centres, and that has been a joint partnership with the national government to make sure that the very remote communities have a quality, holistic and one-stop shop for both children and families. That means that families, for example, can come to a child and family centre and access parenting support. They can also access services such as financial management. They can talk about accessing antenatal care. They can access how to read to their child—so reading programs. They may also access things such as health for the child and for the parents as well as anything else that that community may need. So the children and family centres are well supported by making sure that we work with the communities to identify the need and to address that need for the children and family.

We could go on with more examples. We know that, for example, we had more than 1,816 children enrolled in remote and very remote services in 2013 for early childhood education and care. We also provide professional development for early educators in these centres in remote and very remote areas—and indeed, it has been a very successful program—to make sure that early educators are well supported and understand the needs of the children in their centres. They work very closely with families. We make sure that that program is ongoing. Just recently we have been very successful in getting further federal funding to continue that professional development for early educators in rural and remote areas. Would you like me to go on?

Mr LANGBROEK: No. To the honourable member who asked about the fact that there may not be a lot of specific references to things like e-kindly in terms of its terminology, there are things like the children and family centres and the early years centre, which are also being supported in rural and remote areas. They have also got components of early childhood education as well as that combination of other services. We know that in areas where people may be loath to go to a formal school setting—and I know that from when the director-general and I were on Mornington Island. When we can do them in settings such as the child and family centres and the early years centres, that encourages people to be comfortable and relaxed with their young children and they do get early childhood services there as well.

CHAIR: The time has now expired. We will now adjourn for 30 minutes until 10.45 am. When the hearing resumes we will continue to examine the estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Training and Employment in respect of Education. Thank you all.

Proceedings suspended from 10.16 am to 10.46 am



CHAIR: The hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee is now resumed. I am getting feedback that a lot of the sound is not coming through very clearly. However, we do have to be careful that we do not speak too closely into the microphones. It is being addressed, but up to this point in time apparently the sound has been fairly soft. I would certainly ask all members of the committee, when you are speaking, to speak close to the microphones.

Mr LANGBROEK: But not too close!

CHAIR: That is exactly right, thank you, Minister! This could be somewhat difficult. However, I certainly do recommend that we speak as closely as possible to the microphone. Member for Redcliffe?

Ms D'ATH: Minister, if I can just pick up where we left off in relation to the Queensland Schools Planning Commission. You were questioning why I might have been asking a question about whether there was a detailed analysis done. If I understand your answer correctly, you were saying, 'Well, the planning report is the report itself; that is the work the Schools Planning Commission has done.' The reason I asked the question is: it is the Queensland Schools Planning Commission's report itself on page 8 that specifically states that the commission has recommended that the state, Catholic and independent school sectors monitor and conduct a detailed analysis of current and future network needs. That is why I asked that question. So in clarifying the purpose of asking whether a detailed analysis is done, do you wish to add anything to your answer?

Mr LANGBROEK: No, not in the context of next year's budget. In other words, what we are doing here is looking at the 2013-14 budget outcomes and the 2014-15 prospective outcomes. What we have announced for 2015 and beyond is 10 PPP schools and a school in Toowoomba, at Highfields. In terms of the prospective plans for new schools, we are now going to take the information the Schools Planning Commission has come out with and for which we have announced maps and say, 'Well, we need to develop more'—and that is not for the 2014-15 budget.

Ms D'ATH: In relation to the Queensland Schools Planning Commission, does the minister plan on handing down the second report today?

Mr LANGBROEK: Well, we have been handing down reports over time as more and more maps become available. I understand that we will be releasing some more at 12 o'clock or one o'clock.

Ms D'ATH: Is that the second report?

Mr LANGBROEK: As I understand it, we have released different reports as they became available over time. So this time last year we released the early maps and today we will be releasing some more.

Ms D'ATH: With all due respect, it is not just a document that is released over time; it is specifically the first report to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment which was released last year. I am asking whether the second report is being released by you today.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am releasing more maps today and more reports about the high-growth areas in Queensland.

Ms D'ATH: So that will be the second report from the planning commission?

Mr LANGBROEK: I think it is pretty obvious that we are constantly releasing more planning for schools into the future in Queensland which the former government had not done at all. Last year we released the planning commission report for Brisbane North, Townsville and Caloundra South and then over the subsequent months there were more maps released. Then today, as the member has already asked and as I am happy to confirm, we are releasing more information.

Ms D'ATH: Can you advise when the planning commission provided that second report to the minister?

Mr LANGBROEK: Once again, this is something that would have come into my office over time. It is not really to do with the 2014-15 budget.

CHAIR: Absolutely, I agree.

Ms D'ATH: Well, the Queensland Schools Planning Commission is an expenditure of the department and expenditure of the department is open to questions in estimates.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to answer questions about it. As I say, that is information that has obviously come into my ministerial office relatively recently.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, my question is whether it really is a sign of transparency and accountability by the government, with the intention of releasing this second report from the Queensland Schools Planning Commission partway through the first day of estimates—the only day of estimates on which you are appearing before this committee. And you are not intending on handing it down until later today, limiting any questions that might be asked in relation to that report.

Mr LANGBROEK: Again, I thank the member for the question. Last year when the report was released we certainly had questions from the committee. I will be welcoming questions from the committee about that. Of course, the member is welcome to ask questions of me subsequent to this in the parliament. This is an estimates committee process where we are looking at the 2013-14 and 2014-15 budgets. I am happy to answer any questions, including any that the honourable member may have about the Schools Planning Commission.

CHAIR: As the minister has said, there will be adequate opportunity in the parliament to question a report that is not yet brought down.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you, Chair. Director-General, in relation to SDS page 25, can you advise the committee whether you have had any conversations, cited any documents or received or given instructions relating to the unauthorised release of personal information of a public sector employee?

Dr Watterston: Thank you for the question.

CHAIR: I do query the relevance to the SDS with this.

Ms D'ATH: I have referred to SDS page 25. It goes to human resources expenditure by the department and practices of the department. It is a question I would like answered.

Dr Watterston: As I understand, it is about releasing personal information. To the best of my knowledge, without the specificity around the question and referring to someone in particular, I am not aware that I have ever authorised that or been part of it. If you have something that is more specific—

Ms D'ATH: Simply whether you have, as I say, had any discussions or cited any documents or received instructions specifically in relation to unauthorised release of any personal information.

Dr Watterston: No, I would have to state that I am not aware of any.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. My next question is to the minister. I refer to page 105 of budget paper No. 2, the Budget Strategy and Outlook, which refers to the delivery of education services becoming increasingly unaffordable beyond the current forward estimates due to the Abbott government unilaterally amending funding arrangements from 1 January 2018. Will the minister advise if the department has considered any contingency measures in relation to department expenditure in such circumstances?

Mr LANGBROEK: No. We are talking about 2018, Madam Chair. That is beyond the forward estimates for this government. Therefore the answer is no.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. Minister, I would like to take you to SDS page 9, departmental budget summary, and also to your answer to question on notice No. 17. I note in the budget papers there is a \$180 million underspend in 2013-14. Can you advise which Commonwealth specific purpose payments for education ceased at the end of 2013-14 financial year and what those payments would have been had they not ceased for the 2014-15 year?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Can I just ask you to outline the underspend to which you are referring on page 9—which line it is? I will get our chief financial officer to come up and explain some of the financial aspects and there may be someone else who can answer in relation to the other program. So where is it on page 9?

Ms D'ATH: It is also in answer to question on notice No. 17 in which you have gone to some detail, which I intend to take you to more specifically in a moment.

Mr LANGBROEK: I think you are referring to—

Ms D'ATH: I think it is also on page 32 of the SDS. There is a reference to a decrease in relation to specific purpose payments. I will probably bring in the second question as well. The income statement on page 32 talks about the introduction of the national education reform Students First program, which replaced the school specific purpose payments. What I would like to know is what school specific purpose payments have ceased, the funding relating to each of those payments and how much the funding for the Students First program was in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 years.

Mr PUCCI: Madam Chair, according to the standing orders these questions are supposed to be brief and relate to one issue. She is asking several different questions in one question.

Ms D'ATH: I am happy to separate it. As I said, I was planning on asking that as a separate question but I was just trying to provide clarification—

Mr LANGBROEK: I appreciate your attempting to do that. I have the estimates question on notice with the answer. The deferral from the 2013-14 financial year into 2014-15 and out-year budgets relates to Commonwealth national partnerships. They were a consequence of a delay in the

signing of funding agreements and to better realign expenditure with when program delivery will occur. I have been assured by my department that there will be no significant impact on service delivery. I am happy, by the way, to give the member this detail and then we will come to the second tranche, which I can see on page 32 of the SDS.

I want to go specifically to this issue about the underspend that the member referred to in the SDS. With regard to national partnerships, the schools reform national partnership deferred \$82.836 million into 2014-15 and out years to better align this funding with the implementation of the School Reform Initiative in the current and future years. The deferred national partnership funding will be required to deliver training to meet the increased demand expected to result from the training market becoming fully contestable from 1 July 2014. It is anticipated that training demand will increase during 2014-15 and into 2015-16 as the market strengthens.

The Improving Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership deferred \$26.985 million into 2014-15 and out years and will ensure the continuation of the coaching program, including the development of online coaching modules. An amount of \$63.781 million in universal access to kindergarten national partnership funding was deferred to 2014-15 to assist Queensland to continue to deliver kindergarten programs, given the uncertainty over future funding from the Australian government beyond December 2014. Of course, this morning the director-general pointed that out to the committee. In addition, \$19.3 million in state funding was deferred to the out years to provide for future early childhood education service delivery.

Other national partnership deferrals include the Indigenous early childhood national partnership: \$9.028 million. The deferral will support continuation of services through the 10 children and family centres for the 2014-15 financial year, as funding under this national partnership finished on 30 June 2014. Another deferral relates to the national partnership on the digital education revolution and the National Secondary Schools Computer Fund: \$2.4 million. Funding has been required to be deferred to maintain the devices during the device life—four years. This includes licensing, self-insurance including disaster recovery, key infrastructure maintenance, support and fixed contracts. This program has deployed over 110,000 devices within schools and reached a one-to-one computer-student ratio in December 2011.

Another deferral relates to the National Partnership for Low Socioeconomic Status School Communities: \$5.460 million. The deferral will allow the funding of principal incentive payments obligation in 2014-15 and 2015-16. There are about four more and I want to go through them for the honourable member and then I will ask her to ask the second part of the question to the chief financial officer, that is, about the school specific purpose payments for Students First.

Ms D'ATH: I am very mindful of time and I do have the question on notice response, so I do not require the minister to read me the response. It is already on record. It is about specific purpose payments as opposed to the national partnership.

Mr LANGBROEK: I will sum up by saying that, given that the honourable member asked me about the specifics of \$186 million, I do want to put on the *Hansard* record as opposed to just the questions on notice record about these other national partnerships, so I can clearly elucidate for the benefit of the committee the total amount of \$186 million. I will quickly do this and then I will pass over to the chief financial officer.

Another deferral relates to the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions: \$2.077 million. Deferred funding is required to pay for longitudinal studies that will not be completed until 2018. The National Partnership Agreement for More Support for Students with Disabilities: \$11.332 million. Deferred funding is required to better align the funds with commitments to suppliers and scholarships for teacher aides and teaching staff. My department has recently signed an extension with the Australian government for another \$16.718 million and currently has commitments through to 2017 for some deliverables. The National Partnership Agreement on Empowering Local Schools: \$0.485 million. Deferred funding will enable further work to be done on capability building of school personnel and school disciplinary absences. Finally, the National Partnership Agreement on Training Places for Single and Teenage Parents: \$11 million. Deferred funding is required to better align the funding with the implementation of the national partnership program in the current and out years.

The chief financial officer is Adam Black. I will ask him perhaps to expand on the second part of the question, which was, at the income statement, dot points 1 and 2 on page 32, in response to the honourable member's question.

Mr Black: I am Adam Black, the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director-General of Finance. In terms of the dot points on page 32 of the SDS, the national partnerships that had ceased at the end of 2013-14—can I just clarify that that is the question?

Ms D'ATH: Yes, it is the specific purpose payments.

Mr Black: The low SES national partnership ceased at the end of 2013. The Students First funding in part replaced the national partnership funding for low SES.

Ms D'ATH: Can you give the figures of the funding that ceased for the specific purpose payments?

Mr Black: I can.

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

Mr Black: Yes, I will take it on notice.

Mr LANGBROEK: You cannot take it on notice, but I can.

Mr Black: The amount, however, that it was replaced by was \$131 million in the 2014 calendar year.

Ms D'ATH: Are you able to tell me what the total figure of the specific purpose payments were?

Mr Black: Yes.

Mr LANGBROEK: 794, is it, over the four years?

Mr Black: For the Students First, yes.

Mr LANGBROEK: I see. Sorry: I will let you speak, Adam.

Ms D'ATH: The figure for 2013-14 for the specific purpose payments; what was the total figure for those payments?

Mr Black: I can tell you if I can just—

Mr LANGBROEK: We will take it on notice.

Mr Black: I will take it on notice and come back to you.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you for that. Minister, you have read out the answer to question on notice No. 17. Minister, you have listed a number of programs where the government has chosen to defer some of the funds over to the 2014-15 year and, in some circumstances, beyond the 2014-15 year to offset the loss of funding from some of those Commonwealth programs. Can the minister advise, as a consequence of the deferral, what programs or what grants were not delivered because of that funding being deferred?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. That question on notice answer states that I have been assured by my department that there will be no significant impact on service delivery. As you will see in that answer, the deferrals were a consequence of the delay in the signing of funding agreements. It was prudent for us to make sure that we could keep these services going beyond the expiry of a national partnership, but some of the difficulties have come from the delays in the signing of those funding agreements.

Ms D'ATH: Can that be said in relation to each one of those programs, because some of the figures are quite extensive? In the skills reform national partnership, you are deferring \$82.8 million. The literacy and numeracy national partnership is deferring \$26.985 million. Can you state that the reason that those moneys are being deferred and that, in your words, there is no impact, is that there was a delay in the signing of agreements? When did those programs actually start?

Mr LANGBROEK: The honourable member was a member of the Australian government when the skills reform national partnership was signed off by Craig Emerson, but that had come after we had been dealing with Chris Evans and then Chris Bowen. That is a significant one.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, the question is, when did they start? I know you keep telling me what ministers existed at a federal level. I appreciate the history lesson, but I really would like to know: the literacy and numeracy national partnership, when did it start?

Mr LANGBROEK: Again, I am happy to provide that detail on notice, but as I say the advice from my department is that there is no significant impact on service delivery and we will make sure that those services continue to be provided, even though we have had significant challenges with the former federal government in getting those national partnerships signed off on. That led to an impact in training and, obviously, in other programs as well. We tried to get these things signed off on and,

unfortunately, there were delays. Given that former federal ministers in other areas had said that national partnerships were expiring in things like the universal access, we have prudently saved some money to make sure that we have given absolute priority to providing kindergartens where there was no service as opposed to prospectively giving them more services. That is why we can say, and the advice is, that there will be no significant impact on service delivery.

CHAIR: Thank you, minister. That brings the time for non-government questions to a close. Before I move to the government questions, member for Condamine, it has been brought to my attention that you may wish to correct the record, because maybe some of the time that you said you were caught in traffic was spent in the coffee shop.

Mr HOPPER: I had to have a cup of coffee when I came, yes. There is no problem with that, is there, surely? I just spent two and a half hours in the car, Madam Chair. If a man cannot have a cup of coffee when he gets to parliament, there is something going wrong.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Condamine. I now call on the member for Waterford.

Mr LATTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I would like to go back to an early childhood question. I referenced pages 6 and 15 of the SDS in my previous question, whereby I noted and commended you and the department for what has clearly been a very significant increase in the number of children enrolled in kindy in Queensland. Can you please outline how measures to increase enrolments in an early childhood program have benefitted children in my electorate of Waterford?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Once again, for all these areas around Queensland, but in the area of Logan and Waterford and, of course, Redlands and Albert, all based on the south side of Brisbane, we have seen the same sorts of benefits to students in those electorates as we have around the state. It has been one that we have been proud to deliver. We are absolutely committed to making sure that we continue providing these services and making sure that we supplement and augment them. We have done it, as well, into the school situation where we have added more prep teacher aide hours and it fits with the government's belief, and all the studies that of course we have seen, that the early years are so important. I know that is whether it has been in those programs of refurbishing kindies, that is, the infrastructure similar to what we have had with maintenance issues in schools, or when it comes to making sure that those early childhood centres are being supported and making sure that we get as many of those students. In the honourable member's electorate, certainly there are some students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, just as I do in Surfers Paradise. Those are the students we are trying to get, to make sure that we get to that target of 95 per cent. As you will see in the SDS, and I think the honourable member referred to it, whether it is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or others from a disadvantaged background or those with a disability, that is the where challenge is to get those numbers up to 95 per cent. I will ask the Deputy Director-General to give some more detail.

Ms Sinclair: Thank you, Minister. I am Gabrielle Sinclair, the Deputy Director-General, Early Childhood Education and Care. The other additional strategies that we are putting into place to increase enrolments have included, for example, making sure that we have embedded a kindergarten program in our long day care. Queensland has been exceptionally successful, as you have seen with the data in terms of the increasing participation rates, by making sure that families that need childcare are able to drop their children off in long day care and within that long day care program we are supporting providers. As we said earlier, the majority of providers of early childhood education and care are in the private sector. We are supporting the private sector to make sure that there is a quality kindergarten program embedded in the long day care. That has meant that we have negotiated with the federal government on what was originally 15 hours a week. We now are saying it is unrealistic to expect families to only do 15 hours a week. We have changed that, with the federal government's permission, to 600 hours a year. We know that long day care does not run like a school, which has terms and long holidays. Children attending long day care can participate in the kindergarten program for 600 hours over the whole life of that program. That enables families to drop their children off, to know that they are in quality care and to also know that they are accessing a quality kindergarten program. We have provided a lot of support to long day care service providers to make sure that they are able to increase the quality of the kindergarten program, to employ an early childhood educator and to also make sure that they are meeting all of the 58 elements and standards of the national quality framework.

CHAIR: Thank you. Member for Redlands?

Mr DOWLING: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, with reference to page 4 of the service delivery statement, can you please outline how early childhood education and care services are incorporating the government's early years focus, particularly on literacy and numeracy?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. It has been an unashamed and unabashed focus of the government from the Great Results Guarantee, which is in the early years of schooling, especially prep to Year 2, where we have given a big focus. But we have also committed \$4.4 million over four years, from the 2013 school year to 2016, to improve children's transition into school. Research links positive educational and social outcomes in later school years to a successful start to schooling. Step Up Into Education is designed to prepare children from disadvantaged areas for school and encourage parents to become involved in their child's learning journey. Transitions to school can be challenging for families and children who are financially disadvantaged, who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, who have a disability or who are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. Twenty-four state schools in areas of disadvantage across Queensland are being funded \$40,000 per year and we are making sure then that they are the sorts of things that, while doing that in schools, we are also working on in those early childhood centres.

You have already heard this morning from the deputy director-general and the director-general about the reforms in the department to make sure we have that schooling-to-early-childhood interface. We are making sure that we do not try to interfere with the play based framework. I have mentioned this before. Many people are not aware of and can be confused by the different terminology with preprep, kindy, day care. There are all of those childcare services and then, of course, prep itself. It is understandable that many people looking at this portfolio and asking about particular services can get confused about where it is that we are offering them and to whom we are offering them.

We want to make sure that we have that interface between early childhood, which, as the deputy director-general pointed out before, is often being delivered a lot by private providers. So it is one of those not strange things but just how the sector has developed in that when we think of schooling we have two-thirds and one-third—two-thirds being state schooling and one-third being Catholics or independent schools—providing our schooling for children across the state. In terms of early childhood, whilst we have state kindergartens, it is not exactly the same split and so a lot of our services are being provided by private providers and we needed to ensure that there was some oversight of what they were doing. That was the regulation. Now we are trying to enhance the fact that we have regulated them and are monitoring them under the national quality framework to ensure that what kids are learning there is going to help them as they come through to school. As I have already mentioned, that applies whether it is Redlands, whether it is Waterford or Logan or Redcliffe or Condamine or Surfers Paradise or anywhere else in the 89 electorates in the state.

Mr PUCCI: Minister, an important part of increasing enrolments in early child-care education services is ensuring that there are enough of those services around the state. With reference to page 6 of the SDS, can you please outline where the additional 19 kindergarten services were established, and I heard you talk about the schools earlier and their literacy and numeracy? Can you tell us how many children in these new services are benefiting?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This goes to a question from the member for Redcliffe when she was asking about these services and ensuring that we can keep providing them. This is something about which the department and I have had regular ministerial issues briefings to ensure that we are providing services where they may have had no provision at all, and that is something that is a very intrinsic part of the assessment of new services—that is, to make sure that we balance the providers who are already there and who may be impacted even though they may have need in their areas for more of these services, but there are some parts of Queensland where they have had no services at all. In our attempt to extend the reach of the national partnership for universal access for kids to be able to go to kindy, we have been able to say through the savings that the director-general mentioned already—over \$60 million—that that is planned already for next year as a contingency plan to make sure that we can keep funding these services.

The services that we have established in 2013-14 which have created over 600 new places are in places like Blackwater North at the state school; Marian State School; Glenden State School; Waraburra State School which is at Gracemere; Collingwood Park State School, and I went out and opened that service only a couple of months ago with the member for Bundamba; Fernvale State School; Brightwater State School in Buderim; Jinibara State School in Narangba; the Aurukun Cape

York academy; Calen state school; Mango Hill State School; Peak Crossing State School; Mitchell State School; Cunnamulla early learning; Chinchilla Community Kindergarten, and I know that they have been very thankful for that because I have been to that particular kindergarten; Murilla Long Day Care Centre in Miles, and again we are starting to talk about some regional and rural areas; Borilla Community Kindergarten in Emerald; St Benedict's Catholic school in Mango Hill; and Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic school in Gatton. We are also providing subsidies to support extra kindergarten programs. At the end of April 2014, approximately 1,271 long day care services and 471 other services, including community kindergartens and services on non-state schools, are now approved to deliver kindergarten programs. Members can see that the government has worked prudently and diligently to deliver more of these services and there are more to come in the rest of this financial year.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, in reference to page 6 of the SDS, can you please provide an example of how the \$11.97 million was spent to support programs and services in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in Queensland?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. We invested \$11.7 million in 2013-14 as part of a \$33 million investment through the Renovation and Refurbishment Grant Program and the Essential Upgrades Grant Program to enable 255 early childhood education services to undertake a range of much needed renovations to improve amenity and help meet the national quality standards. This funding has enabled services to upgrade playgrounds, bathrooms and kitchens and remove asbestos. In 2013-14 my department administered approximately \$192.284 million in grants to external organisations for the delivery of kindergarten programs and early year services for families with children from birth to eight years of age. Funding supported more than 1,500 programs and services, including \$162.046 million to establish, operate and support kindergarten programs including, as I mentioned in my previous answer, approximately 458 kindergartens and 1,271 long day care services; support for children with additional needs in kindergarten programs, including disability support funding, specialised equipment and resources and transport options; \$8.858 million under the Renovation and Refurbishment Grant Program to assist eligible kindergarten services to improve amenities and help meet the national quality standards; as I have already mentioned, \$2.854 million under the Essential Upgrades Grant Program to enhance education programs and practice; and the e-kindy program through Distance Education, with 182 children enrolled in semester 1.

Interestingly, Madam Chair, given that you had this responsibility in your role as shadow minister for communities, members of the committee may not be aware that the responsibility for these programs was not actually in Education until after the 2009 election—that is, in state. In other words, it has not been a state responsibility up until now but it now is in Education, Training and Employment and that ties in with this issue that I have been mentioning throughout the morning—that is, from 2009 we started to regulate and now you can see that we are trying to make them more a coordinated part of our department. That is why the position of deputy director-general has been set up. It is now an accepted part of Education, Training and Employment whereas before it was something that was in communities and disabilities. I think the honourable member for Burdekin, who is chair of this committee, will well remember the debate that we had in the lead-up to the 2009 election when the then Labor government had proposed to build these kindies in state school sites in their hundreds. It was just impossible to do it under the national partnership, which is why subsequently we had always proposed to build a number of them in school based kindergartens but also to do what has subsequently been done—that is, to deliver these services in long day care. That is why, as you can see, we have mentioned 1,271 long day care services to provide the program, and it was not necessarily all about the infrastructure, which, whilst it would be valuable, was not going to necessarily lead to better outcomes. We came up with a compromise in this state because we wanted to ensure that kids got the services whilst using the existing services of the long day care and kindergartens that were already there to provide those services. That is why we have seen such significant increases in the numbers from 29 per cent in 2008.

We have also provided money in the amount of \$20.558 million to support the early years services, which we have mentioned and which the honourable member for Condamine asked about before in rural, remote and high-growth communities, including those early years centres providing integrated early childhood education and care, family support and maternal and child health services in 15 communities, as well as nearly \$10 million for the children and family centres, which we have also discussed this morning. They offer integrated early childhood development services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Mr LATTER: I refer to page 4 of the SDS. I appreciate, Minister, that you may have answered some of this previously, but for my benefit I would ask where early years centres have been established and where are the new centres going to be provided in 2014-15. How are they benefiting the communities in which they operate?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This has been something that has also been a very interesting part of seeing the removing of siloing between departments, because most people in Queensland, especially young families, may have been daunted by the prospect of going into very formalised settings. Early on in my term as minister I went to one of the early years centres at Acacia Ridge and was able to get the not for profit—I think it is the Benevolent Society—with whom the department partners to deliver these services. It is one of the early years centres, and I am going to provide some more detail for the committee, especially about the fact that they are a one-stop shop. Nurses from my colleague the Hon. Lawrence Springborg's portfolio welcome mothers who may come into a setting where they come with very young children, and it is to encourage them to come with their very young children. They get the social aspects of engaging with other mothers and while their children are playing or relaxing other workers are then able to say to these mums or dads, 'It's nice to see you all interacting together, but would you mind if we assess your child for any of the aspects that we can in child and maternal health?' These sorts of services with family and parenting support are very valuable and they help parents with children up to eight years.

Four centres have commenced. There is one at the northern Gold Coast in Labrador and the others are in Caboolture, Browns Plains and Cairns and they are now supporting families in 15 communities. As I recall, the one at Acacia Ridge was actually an outreach from the Browns Plains centre. They have small and large centres and outreach services. As well as Acacia Ridge, they are in Beaudesert, Browns Plains, Bentley Park, Bribie Island, Caboolture, Coomera Springs, Deception Bay, Edmonton, Gordonvale, Labrador, Morayfield, Narangba, Nerang and Woodford.

More than 16,000 families were supported during 2013 and some of those services—Caboolture, Cairns, Acacia Ridge, Beaudesert, Woodford and Coomera Springs—offer or are co-located with an early childhood service providing a kindergarten program. So once again we can see that it is not a one size fits all model. What we are trying to do for communities where they face different challenges is to say, 'What is it that might work the best here?' Even a few months ago I went to Jinibara State School in, as I recall, Darren Grimwade's electorate of Morayfield where there is a passionate principal who has established a centre that is not as formalised as this in terms of it being a one-stop shop but who wants to bring more of those programs into his school. They are the sorts of things that we are trying to encourage so that we can work with local communities. It fits with our autonomy mantra—that is, what is it that local communities want so that we can provide that and also get rid of those silos between government?

An external evaluation confirmed the return on investment for these integrated services and found evidence that the children of families who attended the early years centres had improved social, behavioural and developmental outcomes and parenting skills were strengthened, so that carries on from what the deputy director-general mentioned earlier this morning about the long-term benefits that we will see maybe not until the students get to 15. That is a longitudinal study to be able to see the benefits of something that someone received between the ages of birth and eight, but we are confident that that will make a great difference. There is a refurbishment underway at Burpengary Meadows, with completion scheduled for mid-2014. Satellite services from Narangba and Deception Bay will transition to Burpengary to support demand, with smaller outreach services continuing to be provided at Narangba and Deception Bay. I hope that answers the honourable member's question.

Mr HOPPER: Just to correct *Hansard*, the cup of coffee was bought on the run and it is cold on my desk upstairs. If you would like me to bring it down and table it, I can assure you I can. Minister, let us get back to some serious issues that I honestly thought the chair was above. In terms of the Great Results Guarantee funding of \$67.2 million, it will go towards Distance Education and School of the Air. How much of this will go towards Distance Education and School of the Air, whose parents and pupils are really struggling with the difficulties of the national curriculum?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question, because this has been a question of course that relates to something that has been through the development of the Australian Curriculum. Just for the honourable member and the committee's benefit, C2C was a resource—Curriculum into the Classroom—that was developed and rolled out in 2012, the first year of this government, and that was us taking on the Australian Curriculum. For students in Distance Education who had to use paper based resources for very many years, we had our School of Distance

Education writers over at Coorparoo writing a lot of the materials for the Australian Curriculum. I agree with the honourable member: this was a significant issue raised in my first year as minister and we certainly put a lot of resources into developing those subject materials for the first subjects in the Australian Curriculum—English, maths, history and science. It was English, maths and science to start with and then history and this year geography.

In answer to the member's assertion, yes, there is no doubt that parents in isolated areas who are delivering distance education to their students have significant challenges and we have put a lot of resourcing into fixing that. They have acknowledged that there has been a lot of assistance because they are not teachers and some of the terminology, given the amount of time, the short time that had been there to prepare the resource, which is a wonderful resource, and which is constantly being refined and updated, meant that they had challenges. So that is why I did have parents coming from ICPA, the Isolated Children's Parents Association, and parents from the Schools of Distance Education Alliance pointing out the challenges they were facing, especially in the younger years, but the same challenges that teachers in our regular system had found as well in terms of the content and the amount that was in modules for the Australian Curriculum. Queensland was the first place to roll out the Australian Curriculum and when you are the guinea pig, some of those things that are now coming home for others is why we are having a review about the content. Patrea Walton, who is the deputy director-general in state schooling, will give us some more information and then in terms of the actual amount I can reassure the member that when the money was given for the Great Results Guarantee it was given on a formula; not based on where students were attending but in terms of an amount that was given across all primary schools and the bulk of it did go to primary schools, and the schools of distance education, of which I think we have six or seven altogether with the headquarters at Coorparoo, will have got their fair share and we will make sure that get their fair share. Patrea Walton may be able to give you some more detail about the specific detail of the \$67 million.

Ms Walton: Thank you. For the Great Results Guarantee, schools of distance education did receive an allocation based on the methodology and I have the individual Great Results Guarantee documentation provided by the schools signed off. Where they are an independent public school they were signed off by the school council or if they are not an independent public school they were signed off by the director-general. So I do have the individual amounts and I have just scanned the one for Brisbane School of Distance Education which received over \$298,000 for Great Results Guarantee.

CHAIR: Member for Redcliffe?

Ms D'ATH: Thank you, Chair.

Mr LANGBROEK: Sorry, member for Redcliffe, can I just come back? I have got the chief financial officer who can give you the information about the question you asked about SPP funding and the literacy and numeracy national partnership deferral if you would like him to.

Ms D'ATH: Yes, thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Black?

Mr Black: Student First funding was obviously implemented by the Commonwealth government from 1 January 2014 and replaced the former national Specific Purpose Payments and the national partnership arrangements that were in place prior to that. The national Specific Purpose Payments and the Student First funding is untied and represents global funding received by the department. In 2013-14 the department would have received a total of \$977 million in Commonwealth funding for those purposes which included the national Specific Purpose Payments of \$452 million and Student First funding of \$523 million. In 2014-15 the department will receive a total of \$1.128 billion in Commonwealth funding relating to Student First funding, incorporating funding relating to the previous Low SES National Partnership.

Ms D'ATH: Just to clarify, the Specific Purpose Payments for 2013-14 collectively was \$452 million?

Mr Black: For the latter half of the 2013 calendar year, yes.

Ms D'ATH: So just for the calendar year?

Mr Black: Because they changed it from 1 January. I gave you financial year figures. The latter half of the 2013 calendar year, or the first part of the financial year, is the old national Specific Purpose Payments at \$452 million, and the second part of the financial year or first part of the 2014 calendar year is now referred to as Student First and it is \$523 million.

Ms D'ATH: But the \$523 million is not solely for one financial year, is it?

Mr Black: The entire funding arrangement is now called Student First not just the 131 and up to the 794 over those years. The entire arrangement is now called Student First and hence 523 represents about one half of a calendar year or the second part of the 2013-14 financial year.

Ms D'ATH: If that makes up the whole now and the 131 million is, as I understand it, the new money—additional money for schools—can you advise what makes up the other remainder of the 523 million as far as Student First?

Mr Black: Of the 523 million, approximately 67 million relates to the amount that was used for the Great Results Guarantee. The remaining component of that to get to the 131 million, which would be \$64 million, is part of the \$1.128 billion figure that I described as the 2014-15 funding.

Ms D'ATH: I am just trying to make sure I am comparing like with like, that is all. If we can get some clarification, because as I understood it the budget papers of the SDS specifically talk about the Student First funding replacing or offsetting what has been lost with the Specific Purpose Payment and so I am trying to identify the total figure for the 2013-14 funding year, and I appreciate school years don't work that way, and the Specific Purpose Payment funding for that year.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I say, member for Redcliffe, we are happy to provide that for you. If you want to ask me now or ask Adam in a way that we can take it on notice because I wouldn't expect Adam Black to be able to give you a breakdown of an amount of \$1.23 billion, I think, broken down into two six-month segments. But I am certainly happy to provide it for you on notice.

Ms D'ATH: Just to assist in that breakdown, I am seeking to identify what the new money is that is coming out of the Student First funding and how much has been lost through the Specific Purpose Payments. If you could take that on notice that would be appreciated.

Mr LANGBROEK: We will take that on notice.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. Minister, I would like to move on to the year 7 transition. This question is in relation to your question on notice response in No.3 where you provided a breakdown of the progress on infrastructure and other activities in relation to the year 7 transition. You specifically note in the fourth-last dot point on the second page that to support primary teachers transitioning to high school that school teachers and school leaders are being offered an extensive program of professional development focused on developing junior secondary knowledge and capabilities. I understand a course is being run, a 20-hour course delivered over two weeks. Is that what you are referring to when you talk about the extensive training?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. Dave O'Hagan is here and he can expand on what I am going to say, but I have been to see a number of our trial schools in this area. For all of us who have schools in our area with the transition of year 7 into the high school, it is going to be the most significant change since the Pizzey-Nicklin government moved year 8 into high school in 1964. So, it is a very, very good question, especially for our teaching staff who are going to have a lot of change—I have met a lot of these teachers—if they are considering moving. That is why it has been really important for us to reassure graduates as well as at universities. I have been at great pains to say this is going to be amongst the biggest recruiting year in education since we started the prep year. We have teachers who are currently teaching in primary who might like to go to secondary, and that is what I think the honourable member's question is about, and I will ask Dave O'Hagan to give some more detail about that specific program. As I say, there are 20 trial schools around the state. There is one this year in Gordonvale that is the 20th school. Wherever I have been I have seen people who are really passionate and committed to doing something that they are confident is going to be in the best interests of the students who by now are in their eighth year of schooling and it is appropriate that they get the differentiation and the special courses that they can get—whether it is in maths, music, science or languages—that you get in a secondary school setting. But, of course, the teachers who support them are very, very important. I have met some who want to transition, some for whom there is no compunction on them to have to transition and if they want to stay in primary schools they can and we have been happy to say that we have worked very hard with HR to make sure that programs, like the one to which the honourable member is referring, are provided to our primary schools who may want to learn about life in the junior secondary setting. So I will hand over to Dave O'Hagan and he can speak specifically about that particular program.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr O'Hagan?

Mr O'Hagan: Thanks, Minister. To the member's question, the department has partnered with Griffith University to develop and deliver a suite of online junior secondary professional development modules. These are taken as online courses. We know that teachers who are moving from primary

school into secondary require a diverse range of skills, knowledge and experience in supporting learning and the wellbeing needs of young adolescents. So that is a particular focus of the course. The course, as I say, has a couple of online facilitators. So teachers log on, work through the particular modules and they get feedback and there are assessments as they go through. They get a text book. I had a quick preview of it. It was co-edited by a very well-known Queensland educator, Professor Nan Barr, and the feedback that I have had from teachers who have undertaken it is very positive. Facilitators are working with the teachers about the sorts of action research that they then can put into place during the transition. I know some teachers are talking about using some of those things already in their classrooms with the year 7s, particularly if they are a year 7 teacher now implementing the Australian Curriculum. There are things that they are putting into practice now even before they are moving into their secondary school.

Dr Watterston: If I could just add to that, there is the explicit professional development that you are referring to in those online modules, but you would be aware from your own experience that the whole concept of middle school is very different to a primary school or secondary. So there is kind of the implicit professional development that all schools are conducting. I have been in a number of schools in my visits this year where there is a lot of planning and collaboration around what that program will look like within a specific school. The minister has referred to it a number of times today. One of the great principles that we are trying to embed in all the work that we are doing now in terms of the business model around our department is to privilege autonomy in schools. So what the particular middle school program will look like in each school is really going to be at a local level. The professional development will certainly contribute to that, but then there is a lot of planning and work that is what I am calling the implicit professional development that is occurring within schools. So if you have called that 20 hours then I would sort of, without being able to quantify it, be able to reassure you that there is a lot more than 20 hours going into this in terms of the in-school planning and collaboration and work around what it is that is going to be different about this program to just a general secondary school program that has been there in the past.

Ms D'ATH: Director-General, the minister's response said it is anticipated you would need up to 1,300 additional teachers in secondary schools for the year 7 transition. How many do you envisage will need to undertake this junior secondary professional development course?

Dr Watterston: It is a difficult question for me to quantify today because it will be dependent on the background and the implicit, as I talked about before, professional development that is occurring within schools. So, some of the people have worked in middle schools before, others haven't. Again, part of the business model about the department that we are really trying to change from an autonomous point of view is to not sheep dip people through things that they don't need. Part of it would be an assessment and a planning enterprise where we look at the skills that the people have got and the programs that the schools are already running and try to match the professional development to those needs. Without being able to give you a specific answer, my strong suggestion would be that schools are assessing people based on what skill development and capability development they need to be a high-performing middle school teacher at the start of 2015. You would be aware that in 20 schools we have run pilot programs and have been able to develop a whole lot of the strategies around which this professional development has been modelled on.

Ms D'ATH: Hopefully this is a quick question, but are you able to tell me how many teachers have undertaken the first two rounds of that training? Also, is that training only being undertaken by teachers who have already been recruited?

Dr Watterston: I think through the minister we might need to take that on notice just to give you a correct and specific answer.

Mr LANGBROEK: Happy to take that on notice.

Ms D'ATH: Are you able to advise though is it a course that I guess any teacher out there who wants to voluntarily undertake this module can take or whether it is those who have actually been recruited must then undertake that module if, as you say, there is a need to undertake that course?

Dr Watterston: My understanding is it is available and principals know of it. We will need to take the question on notice and come back so that I don't give you a distorted answer, but certainly it is there and it is available to teachers who want to upgrade in that capability. I will come back to you with the actual numbers.

Ms D'ATH: Can the director-general advise how many teachers have already been recruited and have they been assigned to secondary schools as yet?

Dr Watterston: If you can just indulge me for one second. We do have the numbers of where we are up to.

Ms D'ATH: While you are doing that, can I ask: is the recruitment and assignment being done based on subject areas? Do you have a breakdown of the teachers who are already assigned for particular subject areas?

Dr Watterston: While Mr O'Hagan is getting the numbers for you, in terms of the middle school program, with primary teachers going into that middle school program their pre service training will not have been in specific learning domains, as a secondary teacher would. The nature of the middle school program is to have a group of teachers working in collaboration with a small number of students but over a couple of classes. So three or four teachers generally will work across all subject areas with specialist teachers like phys. ed. and other particular areas and then contributing to the program.

Part of the middle school program—for ease of explaining—is to take the best of primary and the best of secondary, to have some domain knowledge that is specific around maths and science but also to have a group of teachers who have pastoral care and the elements that primary schools provide and to shepherd those students into a full secondary program. The art of developing a middle school program is to make sure there is continuity of the humans who are involved in that so those relationships can be developed but at the same time provide specific knowledge. The primary teachers involved in those programs will have domain knowledge but will not have been trained as specialists in particular areas. That is the way the school has the autonomy to put those programs together. In some cases—hopefully, the majority of cases—they will bring secondary based teachers and primary based teachers into that middle school program to get the best of both worlds.

CHAIR: Dr Watterston, the time for this slot is coming to an end. To give you more time—oh, you have the numbers.

Mr O'Hagan: We are running a registration process. To date as of 27 June, 5,895 teachers have registered. Our target was 800 existing primary permanent teachers and to date we have had over 1,165 registered. For current primary applicants we have a target of 200 and 100 current secondary applicants, and we have had registered 2,695. For primary pre service teachers we had a target of around 200 and secondary pre service teachers around 600, and so far we have had 1,177 registered. I have just received an update now that 443 have been appointed—72 per cent from primary schools. We do not have a breakdown as to subject areas, but as the DG was explaining that is not necessarily the way it is being done. We know individual schools are conducting those recruiting processes, and teachers are being contacted and they are going through interview and selection processes led by the principal of the school.

Ms D'ATH: So 443 have been appointed. How many schools did you say?

Mr O'Hagan: That is the total pool. So 72 per cent of those who have been appointed are from primary schools.

CHAIR: Thank you for those figures. I will now move on to questions on schooling. Minister, I refer to page 2 of the SDS regarding the commitment to enhance local decision-making opportunities for Queensland state school principals and their communities to enable a greater focus on delivering education outcomes. How has the \$131 million that was invested in schools through the Great Results Guarantee been used by Queensland school leaders in consultation with their local communities to improve student outcomes which, I have to say, has been received very warmly in a lot of schools in my area?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member and chair of the committee for this question, because it is something that has had a lot of publicity around the state but, most importantly, about the outcomes we can achieve in local communities to improve their student outcomes. Every Queensland state school now has in place and published on its website a Great Results Guarantee agreement that commits it to guarantee every student will either achieve the national minimum standard for literacy and numeracy for their year level or have an evidence based plan developed by the school in place to address their specific learning needs. Each school has identified in consultation with the school community the outcomes to be achieved as well as evidence based strategies to deliver those outcomes. These are dependent on the students' learning needs and help ensure that available resources are used to the best effect.

It also means that schools are using their Great Results Guarantee funding in different ways, because there is no prescription about its use other than an expectation that student outcomes will be improved. Whilst I am doing this, can I thank the people in our schools. As I do principal round tables

around the state, there is no doubt that because of the federal election being held when it was and the resourcing then being given to the state to distribute, it meant a lot of work in my department but also in the schools to get their details both signed off on by the director-general and the department but also to be able to get it out by the end of first term so the money that was meant to be going to schools could be out there delivering the outcomes that we want for the national minimum standard to be met and for the actual activities to be carried on.

I know it was a lot of effort in the first term. Wherever I have been, principals have raised with me some concern about how late the funding occurred because they would rather hear about it in term 4 prospectively for next year. They are the things that we are attempting to do and will attempt to do this year, but it was because of the federal election being held when it was and then a new government coming in and working out the resourcing between the federal and state government. So schools are using the funding in diverse ways. They have the flexibility and autonomy to decide how the funding is spent to improve the performance of all students—for example, by hiring specialist educators to provide additional support, using targeted professional development for teachers or buying additional learning tools like specialised literacy or numeracy programs. Some schools have put in programs to help their parents and they are the things that we want to give our schools the autonomy to make these decisions. It has been unprecedented in Queensland education, but according to the director-general it is also unprecedented nationally. For money to have been given straight to schools without any money being taken off the top for admin—and other states are certainly impressed with the fact that we have done it. Principals are very appreciative of the fact that we have trusted them with this money, because we do trust them to get the outcomes. We have even had acknowledgements from the Queensland Teachers Union saying it was appreciated that we trusted our schools to know what it is that they need to deliver the best outcomes.

It is an exciting initiative for Queensland schooling as it enables our state schools to be accountable for outcomes—in other words, they are happy to be held accountable but when we had this centralised regime of telling people what they had to do that is not as productive as telling people you are empowered, you have the skills to deliver this with your teams, just as we all do throughout our electorates and in our electorate offices. That way it encourages them in their communities to engage on how this extra funding should be spent to achieve the best results for their students.

Dr Watterston: Can I add to that? As the minister referred to, I have had experience in three other states. I have to say, without overcooking this, this is probably the most exciting opportunity I have seen in education in the 32 years that I have been involved. There are a couple of elements to this around autonomy, because autonomy can be a word that scares people. We want our principals in Queensland to have autonomy over the core issues that matter. The core issues that matter are student learning and student improvement and making sure that everyone has the opportunity for success throughout their life.

We need to empower those principals and make sure they have the skills and capacity to make decisions that are really important. This is the first time holistically in the Queensland state school system that we have entrusted principals to be the experts and to be the architects of their own school improvement design. We have remodelled our regional and central offices to make sure that we do privilege that autonomy. But autonomy is really about collaborative autonomy. It is not about schools taking their allocated resources and going off and acting independently. In fact, that is far from it. Other states have used autonomy in some ways down that pathway, but we really want our schools to work together.

Some of the schools that have Great Results Guarantee money have collaborated, have put the money in together and have run programs that run across a school fence and work into clusters. So it has been quite encouraging and inspiring to us to see schools reach out to their colleagues and neighbours to be able to seek the expertise they need to develop this. As the minister said, the Great Results Guarantee was a one-page document that we asked schools to design with minimal red tape but optimum focus. We have asked them what the funding will be used for. What specifically do they need in their environment that will make the difference? Again, it is not central office or Big Brother telling schools what they need. Then what will the strategy be? How will it be implemented and what will it look like? How will the school improve student outcomes? That is the bit that the minister talked about—the accountability. We do not want to see accountability as a tool that we use to denigrate people. We want accountability to be used as a tool for people to demonstrate the return on investment. They can take these resources and be able to show with the additional amount of dollars they have taken what they could demonstrate in terms of student performance and outcomes that will enable students as they go forward to be successful, as I have said before.

It is a really important initiative. It is the forerunner to the way that we want to distribute resources to schools going forward. We want them to use them collaboratively, we want them to know best and we want our regional officers to support them with expertise, mentoring and assistance to make those decisions. Because we realise we have lots of inexperienced principals and acting principals who have perhaps not had these opportunities before, and it is a very different style of leadership to be an autonomous principal as opposed to one who runs programs and works through the central and regional office for all of their expertise.

As I said before, it is very exciting. The minister has mentioned his visits, but I have also made many visits over the year. Schools are really engaged in the process and really conscious about what it is they will be able to demonstrate that will show the difference they have been able to make.

Mr BOOTHMAN: When it comes to the Great Results Guarantee funding, the state schools in Albert are greatly appreciative of that funding. They are doing some absolutely fantastic things. This leads me to my question with respect to page 4 of the SDS. Can you please advise how the second instalment of the Great Results Guarantee funding to be rolled out in Queensland state schools in semester 2, 2014 will be used to build on the great work which has already been undertaken in semester 1?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is an extension of that first question about the Great Results Guarantee. We are acknowledging we have a needs based resourcing model for state schools. I do not think that is something in the debate we had over the last year about funding is necessarily always acknowledged. In Queensland we already have a needs based resourcing model. So we are putting additional money where it is needed and where it can make a difference. We targeted the funding at primary schools because the foundations of literacy and numeracy are established in the early years of schooling.

We also had some loadings to enable additional investment by schools where there are enrolments of Indigenous students, students newly arrived in Australia who have English as an additional language or dialect, and refugees in their third year in Australia. Each Queensland school now has in place and published on its website a Great Results Guarantee agreement that commits it to the guarantee that I mentioned before about achieving the national minimum standard or to have an evidence based plan, and they have the flexibility and autonomy to decide how it is invested.

There are some examples that I can give not necessarily of the school in Albert. For example, Calamvale Special School in the metropolitan region, nearby to Albert, is skilling staff through the provision of a literacy coach and the engagement of a speech language pathologist to work with students and staff. Teachers and staff will also be skilled in the use of systems of communication other than oral speech as used by specific students. Throughout the state, whether it is in Texas state P-10 in the Darling Downs south-west, it is introducing programs to develop oral language such as Support a Talker and PMAP into the Texas kindy, Texas day care and Texas play group to develop preprep literacy programs.

That carries on from our discussion all this morning about having those better connections where a P-10 school is helping people in their cluster at kindy, at day care and in play group to come to school and be better prepared for when they come to prep. They are being very generous in using their resourcing, knowing that it will make a difference to those kids in the early primary years. I know in Albert where we did a principal round table only a couple of weeks ago that it has also been appreciated by principals who are finding and using the resources that they need in their local community to provide the best results for their students.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time has now expired. We will now adjourn for one hour until 1 pm.

Proceedings suspended from 12.00 pm to 1.02 pm



CHAIR: The 2014 estimates hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee is now resumed. We continue to examine the portfolio area of Education. I call on the member for Redcliffe.

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, could we just provide a couple of answers to questions taken on notice that the honourable member asked? I will pass to the director-general.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Dr Watterston: The honourable member asked about the numbers of teachers involved in the professional learning program around Flying Start for middle school. One hundred and eleven have undertaken the course so far and completed. There are 113 enrolled for August. So we have funded 500 places up to now and we will look at extending that should there be the demand and need.

Ms D'ATH: And has the funding to extend that training been budgeted for in the current 2014-15 budget?

Dr Watterston: No, but there is a contingency fund that we could probably draw from. There is also the capacity for schools to allocate their own resources. The nominal cost of the program, based on the 500 that we have tendered for, is about \$382 per head. So it is within the resources of schools, should they want to also use it. But the department could look at it, depending on demand, and assess it when the time comes.

Ms D'ATH: When you say that the school could fund that out of their own budget, would you envisage the primary school funding the teacher who is leaving the school?

Dr Watterston: No, absolutely not. It would be the secondary school looking at the capacity and capability of each person, as we talked about in the previous answer. So it would be based on the school needs and individual teachers, but it certainly would not be the primary school that the teachers departed from.

Ms D'ATH: So it would be up to the secondary school, once the applicant has been appointed to the secondary school, to then find out whether they need to undertake that course or not, between now and the new year?

Dr Watterston: Unless I am corrected, that would be my understanding.

Ms D'ATH: Just staying on the issue of the year 7 transition, the answer to the question just before the break—that there are 443 teachers now appointed—and going back to the response to the question of notice that there is expected to be 1,300 additional teachers needed. How confident is the department that they are going to finalise the remaining positions before the end of the school year?

Dr Watterston: We are very confident. We have certainly been planning to have schools staffed appropriately, as we would in any year, even though this is an exceptional year. So that planning has been in place for certainly over two years, making sure that we are well ready by the time we would normally release those staffing allocations. The specificity of that question in terms of 'by the end of the school year' is something about which I would have to defer to Dave, just to be confident that that deadline is in fact the deadline. I mean, some appointments in other systems that I have been in can sometimes take until after the close of the school year but certainly in preparation for the new school year starting.

Unless there is anything to correct, we are very confident. We have done the planning. We have the applicants. We have enough staff to cover all vacancies. It is really a matter of matching those vacancies with the school and finishing off the work. Without giving you a cast-iron guarantee—I do not want to be one short or whatever—an enormous amount of preparation and planning has gone into making the whole transition of year 7 into secondary a successful event and an ongoing experience that we continue to advance, I suppose, in terms of, as we have talked about today, the professional learning that is required in that whole middle school program. From a staffing component and certainly a capital works component, we are extremely confident that it will all be in place.

Ms D'ATH: I did come up with that time frame, which is the end of the school year, because I consider that reasonable to give the schools and the teachers certainty as to whether they are taking up that new position. Is that a time frame that the department has set or have you given yourself up until the start of the new school year to fill those positions? Have you set yourself a time frame to fill these positions?

Mr O'Hagan: The answer to your question is yes. We have put a governance program in place which is chaired by my position. We are working closely with the regional HR who staff schools. It is their principal role to work with schools on staffing. We are monitoring the placements certainly through the registration process. Then the regions are confirming those appointment places in the particular schools. We are working closely with those. We expect, certainly for the existing permanent teachers who are transitioning, to have those established before the end of the year.

As the director-general was saying, if forecast enrolments are out and are varied so we have more secondary students in one particular school than another, that will revert to the normal staffing process. So HR in particular regions will look to staff those schools if there are any variations.

Ms D'ATH: Mr O'Hagan, earlier you mentioned that your target was 800 existing primary school teachers applying for these positions. Can you advise whether you believe there will be a surplus of primary school teachers at the end of this process? Presumably not all of them are going to go across to the new junior secondary school. Is there an expectation there will be a surplus of primary school teachers? How is the department planning to deal with that?

Mr O'Hagan: The advice I have had to date is that there is a certain factor of attrition built in to those numbers. We also believe that over the course of the next couple of years, because of enrolment growth, most of those primary schools will be back where they were—over the next two to three years potentially. Again, that is the role of HR staffing officers working closely with their regions. I think the issues we have are, for the registered pool, ensuring there is not an oversupply in, say, the south-east corner and questions around how we are going to staff some of the more rural and remote areas. That is the sort of thing they are turning their attention to, to make sure that matches the school need.

Dr Watterston: If I understand your question correctly—correct me if I do not—we do consistently, in any year other than this exceptional year, have an oversupply of primary school teachers. If your question is, 'Will there be an oversupply of teachers who are currently employed?' then no. But there certainly will be, as every state experiences, an oversupply of primary teachers in terms of graduates and people available.

Ms D'ATH: No, my question specifically goes to those that would become surplus to the school's needs based on the year 7 transition and who are existing primary school teachers at the school at the time.

Dr Watterston: We have worked assiduously to make sure that substantially appointed teachers all have a position going into 2015.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I advise, too, that as I have travelled around the schools growth has been significantly higher in those early years of school, say in prep to year 3. That, we anticipate, will mean that, as the deputy director-general said, a lot of these schools will be back to where they were, even though they are prep to year 6.

Ms D'ATH: And taking that point on board, my next question, Minister, goes to the allocation of classified officers in those primary schools where they will see a reduction in student population numbers as a consequence of the year 7 transition. I know that you have a criteria set out for those schools but, as I understand it, criteria is based on some discretion and it is on a case-by-case basis whether there will be any downgrading of any classified officers because of a reduction in student population. My question is whether for the start of the 2015 school year there will be any downgrading of classified officers in any primary schools as a consequence of the year 7 transition.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Can I just get you to specify who those classified officers would be?

Ms D'ATH: Well, the deputy principal. So in your own fact sheet you talk about principals, deputy principals, heads of curriculum and business service managers.

Mr LANGBROEK: I just wanted to clarify that that is what you were speaking about—not the AOs and people like that. Whoever it is, we have reassured everyone through the HR process—these are things that I have been asked about at principal round tables—that they were not going to be downgraded. I will let Dave O'Hagan report on the detail because, as I understand it, it was guaranteeing their positions for a certain number of years. And then people said, 'But will I be able to be in the same school?' They are the nuances of HR that I will let David speak about, because you may have the position but obviously then there will be an issue if your school has significant loss in numbers. Then you maintain the position but not necessarily in that school. David?

Mr O'Hagan: Thanks, Minister. Certainly the Flying Start governance board has looked at that particular issue. We have said there is a three-year transition to ensure no existing promotional officer is disadvantaged. So that applies to deputy principals, heads of curriculum and BSMs over that three-year period. I will just reference what I said earlier. That is, we are expecting enrolment growth in primary schools. Enrolment projections would suggest that they will be back. So that three-year transitional period will take us back to probably where we were.

Ms D'ATH: So even if an individual school has a reduction in student population numbers in 2015 and 2016 as a consequence of the year 7 transition, there will be no shift for any school? Is that what you are saying?

Mr O'Hagan: I think we have made that commitment to the existing officer. So if they are the deputy principal in a primary school and the personal position and circumstances—there is a three-year transition. At the end of that period, we will have to look at the staffing arrangements and so on.

Ms D'ATH: But if I can clarify what the minister just said, you are guaranteeing that position but not necessarily with that school; is that correct?

Mr O'Hagan: They will remain at their school—if they remain at the school during that transition, yes. There will be no disadvantage. There will be no downgrading of their position.

Ms D'ATH: But the school itself. Under the three-year transition, is it possible that a school itself would see a downgrade of any of those classified positions?

Mr O'Hagan: Not as a result of the year 7 transition. I mean, there might be some other circumstances.

Ms D'ATH: I appreciate that.

Mr O'Hagan: It is sort of hypothetical. But we are making a three-year transitional commitment to those officers to remain at their current level of classification.

Ms D'ATH: At their existing school?

Mr O'Hagan: Yes.

CHAIR: Member for Redcliffe, sometimes the questions do get a little hypothetical, so I would be aware of that.

Ms D'ATH: But this is specifically about the year 7 transition and the transition of the classified officers so it should not be hypothetical but already clear to schools what is happening. In relation to the construction of any additional classrooms needed in our secondary schools for the year 7 transition—and this might be a question best directed at the director-general—are there any schools where the installation or construction work has not commenced?

Dr Watterston: Thank you for the question. To the best of my knowledge, and I am sure that we have it in a brief, my understanding is that all schools will be completed in terms of capital works on time, except for State High and State High has got a \$60 million project that will be available to the school in 2016. In the meantime, demountable buildings will be in place so their classrooms should be set as well. It is my understanding that we have got all schools set ready now to have sufficient capacity for students on day 1 of 2015.

Mr LANGBROEK: Member for Redcliffe, I can give you some details. The infrastructure delivery is complete at 225 schools, with 90 per cent of refurbishment projects and 98 per cent of relocatable building projects now practically complete. There are also those 67 new in situ building projects continuing through the remainder of 2014. The major redevelopment project that the director-general just referred to at Brisbane State High School is scheduled for completion in 2016.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, can I just clarify about the 67. The figures between how many need to be done and how many have commenced I think add up to about 62 or 63, from the question on notice. Can you just explain the difference with the 67 projects?

Mr LANGBROEK: From the answer to the question on notice and the 67 I have just referred to, we will take it on notice and make sure we provide you all the detail.

Ms D'ATH: Okay. I will just go back to my original question. Are there any secondary schools where the installation or construction work has not commenced yet?

Mr LANGBROEK: Not that I am aware of. I would not have thought so but I will ask Dave to comment.

Mr O'Hagan: All projects have been briefed, which means they have been let for construction. You will appreciate that in some areas there is no need for a new classroom, but the figures that I have show that we are doing 1,100 classroom refurbishments. They may or may not all have started at this stage, but they will be complete for the start of 2015.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, can I refer you to the SDS and page 9 of the departmental budget summary. I wish to take the minister to the five schools that have closed—Charlton State School, Fortitude Valley State School, Nyanda State High School, Stuart State School and Toowoomba South State School. Minister, can you please advise if the department has sold or disposed of any of the land of those closed schools in the last year?

Mr LANGBROEK: No, we have not.

Ms D'ATH: Can you advise what the time frames are for the sale of those properties?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. What we have said about any disposal of land is that it will go back into Education, Training and Employment projects to make sure that we continue to enhance our infrastructure. What we have actually done with all of these properties is that, rather than having the land being disposed of rather quickly as has happened in the

past, we have been working with the Deputy Premier's department with an agency there called GLAM, the Government Land and Asset Management unit, to make sure they look at the planning issues around any of those properties before they are sold so we can maximise any benefit to the state. So it is the Deputy Premier's responsibility and any questions that you might have about any of those particular schools should be referred to him.

Ms D'ATH: So the minister is not able to advise whether any of those are already on the market for sale?

Mr LANGBROEK: No, as I say it is actually in the Deputy Premier's area of responsibility.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, Everton Park State High School was originally one of the schools to be closed, and the school community lobbied successfully to have the school remain open. I understand the school put a detailed proposal to the government outlining a range of alternative options to the complete closure. Minister, can you advise whether there are any decisions or proposals under consideration as to disposing of, leasing out the use of or reducing the footprint of Everton Park State High School?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. It goes to the answer to the last question, which is that any land that is part of that which is not necessarily part of the school footprint would go to GLAM, the Government Land and Asset Management unit, and therefore the Deputy Premier would be responsible.

Ms D'ATH: As I understand it though, this is still an existing state high school under the responsibility of the Department of Education, Training and Employment. The school has remained open but I understand that one of the future options might be to sell off part of that land or lease part of that land. I assume that would be a decision you would need to make first.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. Your summation of the situation there is correct because that is what the school community actually suggested themselves as part of their solution. In terms of the detail, I would say we are still working on that. The Deputy Premier will be responsible for making sure that his department works with mine about what actually happens there to the excess part of the footprint.

Ms D'ATH: So has a briefing come from the department to the minister at this stage on what will happen to the state high school land? Have any proposals been formulated?

Mr LANGBROEK: No.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, the department's maintenance program has been underpinned by asset sales of \$30 million in previous financial years and has been budgeted in this manner for the 2014-15 financial year. Minister, can you advise what department assets will be sold to meet this budget over the 2014-15 financial year?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is of course one of our signature policies that I know all members of the committee would have seen benefits from in their local schools. It is a commitment of \$300 million over three years to fix our schools. Wherever we have been—for those of us who were in opposition for some years—we have seen principals saying that they were receiving small amounts of money, and that is why we had it even identified in the Commission of Audit as a significant issue affecting people's confidence in our schools. So we made sure we have funded that and we made sure we funded it with a contribution from the department.

That is fair enough when you have got 2,500 pieces of land that have been purchased at different times, and it is part of the ongoing course of business in the department to dispose of land and purchase new pieces of land. We have made sure that we have done that in a responsible way—once again dealing with those issues of GLAM, the Government Land and Asset Management unit, to make sure that, with any of those land disposals we are going to do, we get the highest and best use before we put them on the market. The \$100 million for maintenance is already in the budget, as the honourable member would know, and we will make sure that is rolled out and delivered. The important thing is we will always be consulting and working with local communities about aspects of land that may end up being sold off to make sure that we improve their local facilities.

Ms D'ATH: As a follow-up question to clarify that, Minister, can you provide to the committee a list of the assets that were disposed of in 2013-14 and what assets you are proposing to dispose of for the 2014-15 year to ensure that you generate that revenue that you have budgeted for?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to provide the list for 2013-14, bearing in mind that many of these sites were ones that were for sale under the former Labor government. Dave O'Hagan may be able to provide some more detail.

Mr O'Hagan: In a moment, Minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Whilst Dave O'Hagan is looking for that, we are happy to provide the list of what was provided in 2013-14 and then the general principles, because I am not even positive that we have a list of things for the 2014-15 disposals. I have now been told that there is no budget allocated for 2014-15. We will happily provide to the member the 2013-14 list.

Ms D'ATH: Previous budgets and briefing notes have talked about generating \$30 million of revenue each year over the forward estimates. Are you saying for the 2014-15 year that there is no budget to generate revenue to fund the maintenance budget?

Mr O'Hagan: That is correct.

CHAIR: At this stage, I will call on the member for Condamine to ask a question.

Mr HOPPER: Minister, on page 20 you talk about the transition of year 7 to secondary. I will start with an example and then ask a question. The cost to keep grade 7 in Julia Creek is \$80,000, with \$20,000 to be paid by the council and the other \$60,000 to be recovered from parents. Minister, is there any financial assistance available for parents who now have to pay out of their own pockets for an in-house teacher to be able to keep a grade 7 classroom in bush towns where there is no high school?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I would just like some more detail about that. You are saying that \$60,000 is going to come from parents and I am not quite sure about that. What do you mean?

Mr HOPPER: The member for Mount Isa has given me this information which is happening in Julia Creek as we speak. I have been told that \$20,000 is being put up by the council and the parents have to raise the other \$60,000 because the cost is \$80,000 to keep year 7 in Julia Creek.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I think the local mayor came to see me about this particular issue and it is an issue that the member for Mount Isa has raised before—that is, trying to ensure they are provided with some sort of resource to allow year 7 to stay in those communities. We have wanted to work with those communities, and I have met with that mayor a couple of times and I have certainly received her letters about the issue.

Whilst it is important for local communities to be able to have these young people stay with them in their local areas—and it can be in Cloncurry, Julia Creek or some of the far-flung areas of Queensland—it is also important to keep in mind the best outcomes for the students. When the director-general and I were in Karumba a few months ago, there was a classic example where we met some students who were in either year 6 or year 7 who were so keen to go to areas where they would have more interaction with more students of a similar age.

We are not trying to say that year 7 will not be able to be provided in these areas at all should they choose to stay in their community. That means we want to work with mayors like that one and in other areas. We will provide distance education. When a local council says they may provide a classroom and then a teacher needs to be provided as well, that is the sort of thing where we want to work with them but there are limits as to what we can do. When the council says on the one hand, 'We will do everything we can to keep them here,' but then also says, 'We still need a state contribution'—which I am accepting as your statement, even though I have not seen it absolutely correctly pointed out—to provide a teacher is not necessarily what the government is prepared to do in this case.

We want to work with those communities because we want the best for them and their children. We must remember that for those children who are in grade 7 it will be their eighth year of schooling, and to get the best outcomes for those students it is important that they are surrounded by good student numbers and they get good subject selection. That can actually give them a better education—as opposed to staying in a community simply because of what people think happened with kids of the same age in the past. In fact over 40 per cent of them will be turning 13 in year 7 any way, and they are often looking for that extra stimulation and they are going to get that from being around other kids of their own age.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We will move on to the government and there will be a time for further questions soon. I call the member for Redlands.

Mr DOWLING: Minister, I refer to page 16 of the Service Delivery Statement which shows that in 2013-14 only 55 per cent of Indigenous year 9 students were at or above the national minimum standards for writing, as opposed to 74.7 per cent of all students. How can schools use the Great Results Guarantee funding to improve the Indigenous outcomes?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I think what this shows is that we do not shy away from looking at statistics that may not be as flattering as we would like them to be, and then we look at what these circumstances are that might lead to these statistics. I can report to the committee that in Indigenous education Queensland has done better than any other jurisdiction around the nation, and that has been acknowledged by former minister Peter Garrett as well as others. We are very proud of what we have done in Indigenous education but of course there is a long way to go.

When we look at the statistic for something like that year 9 test for writing, you will see that for all students the statistic was quite low as well. I might get Chris Rider or Patrea Walton up to give some detail about some of the aspects of that particular task in Indigenous education. I do not mind whether it is Patrea or Chris. Before we go to that I want to give some details about how the Great Results Guarantee can actually help them to address something like that.

There are some loadings, as we have already mentioned, with a needs based funding system to make sure that additional investment by schools can happen with our enrolments of Indigenous students. I remember that some of the early iterations of the Gonski funding when I first became the minister meant that there were aberrations in the model. This was a federally constructed model that said that if you had 100 Indigenous students, or up to 100, you got no funding at all for Indigenous students, but beyond 100 there was a massive amount of money that came. So we wanted to make sure that we smoothed out some of those aberrations in our own state needs based funding model. So we have said that Indigenous enrolments attract an extra \$110 in funding under the Great Results Guarantee for each Indigenous student enrolled in all years of schooling to help build capacity, to support development of foundation literacy and numeracy learning across all students.

Remember, honourable members, the Great Results Guarantee money, whilst it is \$131 million, is a very, very small portion on top of the money that is already given. So I do not want people to think that \$110 per student may not sound like a great amount, but on top of all the other loadings that are received often and through the money that we allocate, it is a significant amount. Schools will have the flexibility and autonomy, again, to decide how the funding should be spent. They are using their funding in different ways. They might hire specialist educators, target professional development for teachers or purchase additional learning tools, such as specialised literacy or numeracy programs. I will not go on, because I might expand on that a little about an example at Cherbourg State School where I visited as well. Patrea, did you want to add something about the writing task statistic? As a former director of the Queensland Studies Authority and now back as the deputy director-general in my department, this was at a time when Patrea Walton was in charge of the QSA and, therefore, responsible for those assessment tasks.

Ms Walton: Thank you, Minister. I would like to comment, if I may, Minister, further to what support we are providing for teachers around that particular aspect of the NAPLAN assessment regarding writing. In conjunction with the Queensland College of Teachers, the Department of Education, Training and Employment has been working on a series of online modules to assist teachers with the teaching of reading, the teaching of writing and so on and also the teaching of mathematics and the teaching of science. We realise the importance of providing this support online so that teachers in isolated communities have the opportunity to upskill their practices in regard to the teaching of these particular aspects of the curriculum. Not only are the online courses being provided in conjunction with the Queensland College of Teachers but certainly the literacy and numeracy coaches are also across the regions. They provide direct support to schools on how to improve the various aspects of literacy and numeracy including writing.

Mr PUCCI: Minister, the additional funding through the Great Results Guarantee has clearly been welcomed by Queensland schools. With reference to page 23 of the SDS, which notes the importance of additional funding received by the Queensland government under the Commonwealth Students First initiative to the department's bottom line, can you please advise how the Queensland government is working with the Commonwealth to ensure that we can continue to make appropriate investments in Queensland schools?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. This is something, of course, that goes to something that the honourable member for Redcliffe asked in relation to some clarification about some of this money. So whilst this may not be the detail that the honourable member for Redcliffe was looking for, we have committed to providing that anyway in an open and accountable way.

Let me give you some more detail. The Students First policy for schools commits to delivering a simple, stable and sustainable approach to funding that gives schools, teachers and parents certainty for the future. In December 2013, the Australian and Queensland governments agreed to new funding arrangements for Queensland's state schools over the forward estimates period to 30 June 2017. The Students First funding from the Australian government provides Queensland state schools with a total of \$4.4 billion commencing on 1 January 2014 and ending on 30 June 2017.

In the 2014-15 federal budget the Australian government announced a change to indexation rates for school funding commencing in 2017-18. From the 2017 school year onwards, Students First funding will be indexed by the consumer price index with an allowance for changes in enrolments. The changes in indexation rates will have a significant impact on Queensland state schools and pre-empt the Australian government's previously planned review of indexation arrangements.

The 2014-15 federal budget also foreshadowed that, from 2018 onwards, the Australian government will provide equal per student base funding and an even proportion of existing loadings to address disadvantage. Final state allocations will be subject to formal negotiations between the Australian government and the states and territories scheduled to commence in 2017-18.

The Australian Education Act 2013—AEA—and the Australian Education Regulation 2013—AER—provide the legislative basis for the Australian government's funding model for government and non-government schools. The AEA and the AER outline how funding is calculated, the loadings for disadvantage and funding conditions. The Australian government is conducting a review of the AEA and the AER to remove the command and control features of the legislation. Queensland has been a strong advocate for amendments to the legislation regarding the overreach of the Australian government into system management and additional administrative and regulatory burden upon schools and school systems.

Can I just say for the committee's benefit that when I say that to you—that the Australian government is conducting a review of the AEA and the AER—that Catholic schools and independent schools were actually caught up in the AEA and the AER simply because the former federal government said to them in the lead-up to the last election, 'This is what you're going to get. You're going to get three per cent a year.' That was why I now have been out, for example, to the autism school at Redcliffe. When people read the newspapers or hear on the media that they are receiving only a three per cent increase, the education index goes up considerably more than that. But those independent schools and Catholic schools were caught up by the former department of the former federal Labor government into the Australian Education Act, which is why Queensland would not sign up. We have received subsequently more as a result, which is why our funding as well at a state level has gone up across this department by about seven per cent when you include training.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister I support the government's early years focus to ensure that our students get the right start to our education. I refer to page 4 of the SDS and the promotion of teacher quality through Great Teachers = Great Results. What steps are being taken to ensure that secondary schools have the specialist teachers they need, particularly in the maths, science and manual arts subjects?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. This is a very good question because, again, of the differentiation, the specialisation that students receive when they get to secondary school, which is to the heart of why we are putting year 7 into high school when these students are in their 8th year. I thank the member for the question about Great Teachers = Great Results, because it is a direct action plan and it represents an investment of \$537 million over five years, commencing in 2014. It focuses education reforms in two critical areas: professional excellence in teaching, elevating teaching standards across-the-board, rewarding high performance and positioning the highest paid teachers where they are needed most; and boosting school autonomy, empowering and enabling school leaders and teachers to drive outcomes for students, including stronger discipline. We are focused on elevating our teaching standards and improving professional excellence to support our teachers from the beginning of their career as they make the transition from graduate to skilled professional by introducing an accredited mentoring program for beginning teachers to learn from experienced, high-performing teachers, rewarding high-performing teachers and principals and providing additional three-year fixed term master teacher positions to schools in most need.

This will also include actions to boost the supply of specialist teachers for secondary schools, especially in the important areas of science, mathematics and industrial technology and design, including working with school principals to develop a secondary teacher attraction plan that outlines a range of strategies, including the marketing of teaching as a career; exploring new and improved

pathways into teaching; options for training school partnerships with universities that build on the success of the teacher education centres of excellence with schools working directly with preservice teachers providing access to trained mentors, faculty meetings and the coordination of professional experience; improving information regarding preservice teacher performance during professional experience through the implementation of a common professional experience reporting framework; and providing targeted incentives to high-priority teaching aspirants through scholarship programs to attract high-calibre aspirants. The implementation of this plan is now underway.

Can I advise the committee that this is something that is a national debate that we are having about attracting people into teaching, about retaining them in teaching and about making sure that they are mentored as they get there and including working with the universities about the quality of the graduates who come out. It is a contentious debate and it should be at a much higher level than just the debate that we sometimes see, which is about what OP or what ATAR score someone has when they choose to get into teaching. It is a very, very difficult debate. This department has had a number of programs over a number of years to attract high OP graduates to work with those teacher education centres of excellence. I have seen the work from Griffith University down at the Gold Coast. I think at Benowa State School there was a centre of excellence. I think there was another one at Caboolture. Also, QUT has done a lot of work with some of these teacher graduates. Certainly, when these teachers come out they are working in some of the most difficult environments to work. As a teacher said to me at the Logan forum—and maybe the member for Logan will remember this—when it comes to teaching we all have these images of what it is like being in our schools. But for some teachers it is important to be able to work with children who are difficult to like. It is not just a matter of asking, ‘Do you like children?’ You need to be prepared to work with children who are difficult to like and that can be because of the circumstances that these children have come from—circumstances beyond their control. But as a government we are looking forward to the accord summit in September working together on these issues. But just having a debate in the papers with op-eds about a simplistic notion like, ‘You can only take kids from the top third of ATAR,’ such as New South Wales has done, to me is a heavy handed approach, which means that we could be missing out on some of the best teacher graduates prospectively simply because they may not have been as switched on at school as they might be. But it is a broadbrush method of saying that we need to talk about it. We need to make sure that our teachers are valued and respected, because it is not exactly great for them to hear this constant debate about whether their quality is up to speed. The department and the government have a responsibility to make sure that teachers are taught how to teach reading and are taught how to do behaviour management. But they are the things that, before we even get to the secondary school specialisation that the honourable member asked me about, we are all working together to make sure that we have the best quality teachers in our schools and that we certainly value and respect them.

When we speak about teacher quality as a government, we say that because we know that parents know that the most important person in the classroom for their children is the teacher. It is no reflection on the quality of the upwards of 60,000 headcount of teachers. I am not casting aspersions on them. I know that they are doing a great job, sometimes under very, very difficult circumstances. We are determined to support them as well through Great Teachers = Great Results.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, with respect to page 5 of the SDS, can you please advise how the \$100 million being invested into the Fixing Our Schools Fund for 2014-15 will enable schools to continue the necessary work to clean up the maintenance backlog so that they are safe, pleasant places for students to learn?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that other members of the committee have asked me about this today. We are committed to robustly addressing this inherited backlog of maintenance across all of Queensland’s public schools. There is no doubt that it improves the morale of the school. I was at the art show at Gaven State School only a couple of weeks ago with the honourable member. To see schools looking immaculate, obviously, makes a difference to the parents who might consider taking their children there. That is the case wherever I go. For the years that I was in opposition, which was from 2004 to 2012, in my local area of Surfers Paradise, with the five state schools that I have there, there is no doubt that they were receiving a very, very small maintenance allocation. In a portfolio that has 1,233 state schools, members will know that some are up to 150 years old, including I think the school where we did the principal roundtable, Pimpama State School. It is one of our foundation schools, or one of our earlier schools. We had the contrast between the new schools that we have built and then, of course, older schools where maintenance issues are quite significant.

As I have already mentioned, we are providing \$300 million over three financial years to provide a major improvement of facilities and their functionality for students—\$200 million via the Advancing Our Schools Maintenance initiative and \$100 million via the Schools initiative. It is the final instalment of the \$300 million commitment. It is designed to address the significant portion of outgoing maintenance works and help address the ongoing maintenance costs associated with significant past capital investment works such as the Building the Education Revolution, the BER, and the State Schools of Tomorrow initiative. They were delivered without ongoing operating funding. We were appreciative of them, but it is important that, when you have depreciation, which would normally be funded at about one per cent of value, that is going to be a significant issue for schools into the future. Most of the State Schools of Tomorrow and Building the Education Revolution halls, libraries and science blocks, for example, are obviously relatively new, but there is going to be a maintenance issue over time.

So it is an unprecedented level of maintenance funding support. It has achieved excellent outcomes for schools. We have enabled them to go beyond QBuild to get cluster quotes. We have even provided support for principals to be able to use up to five per cent of the value of their maintenance money to employ someone to oversee a project because they are not project managers. These are all the modifications we have made as I have travelled around the state, and as the director-general has travelled through the regions, and we have listened to people saying, 'Here are ways that we could refine what we need to do locally.'

Through enabling other people to access some of the funds but making sure that we had an important balance of prequalified supplies providing these services, we have also been able to achieve an up to 20 per cent increase in what we can achieve for our schools. Most people will know that what QBuild used to charge, especially in rural and regional areas, was not very competitive simply because there was market failure there. They have become much more competitive than in the past. Our schools are seeing a lot more for their money.

I can advise the committee that the funding methodology for the 2014-15 Fixing Our Schools initiative will help ensure that all schools will receive at least their funding allocation prior to the current Advancing Our Schools Maintenance and the Fixing Our Schools initiative or a minimum of \$5,000, irrespective of their liability, and a funding boost is available for high-liability schools to fully fund all schools to the level of their pre-existing 2011-12 backlog. What that means is that in our first year I think we gave schools up to \$160,000, but of course schools like Miami State High School or Mansfield State High School, which the director-general and I have been to, sometimes had \$3 million to \$4 million in maintenance backlogs. Taking \$160,000 off their backlog only brought them down to, for example, \$3,840,000. We have now given them increasing amounts over the last two years—last year and this year—to enable all schools to come down to clear their 2011 maintenance backlog. That is a significant issue when you imagine schools like Mansfield or Miami where massive amounts of money are being put in to make sure that local parents and the local community can see that that is a valued place to be and that that is where they could and should send their children with every confidence that they are actually learning in decent learning environments.

CHAIR: I call the member for Waterford.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I refer to page 5 of the SDS and the latest \$100 million in the Fixing Our Schools Fund. In line with the government's commitment to enhancing school autonomy and local decision-making opportunities, how are schools in communities such as those in my electorate of Waterford now able to address maintenance issues in a more efficient manner than they may have been able to do previously?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member. I will give you a bit of a global view about the total amount and how we are distributing it. Then I will be happy to give the specific details about the honourable member's electorate.

In 2014-15 we have allocated a total of \$192.18 million towards infrastructure maintenance—\$100 million of this spend is through the Fixing Our Schools Fund. Schools, in consultation with their P&C association, choose their preferred method of maintenance delivery—which is either Building and Asset Services, or formerly QBuild, or direct to market, D to M. In 2013-14, 30 per cent of schools have elected to deliver their planned and routine breakdown maintenance via D to M. Simplified procurement arrangements now make it easier for D to M schools to engage contractors for their maintenance needs. A standing offer arrangement has been established to allow schools undertaking maintenance using the D to M option to significantly reduce red tape when procuring contractors from the private sector.

The following schools in the Waterford electorate have chosen to deliver maintenance via D to M in 2013-14: Beenleigh State High School, Mabel Park State School, Marsden State High School and Waterford West State School. The following three schools have fully cleared all 2011-12 maintenance liability: Beenleigh State High School, Beenleigh State School and Edens Landing State School. The remaining six schools in the Waterford electorate will be allocated funds under the Fixing Or Schools initiative to clear all remaining 2011-12 liability.

So I think members of the committee can see that this has been a significant issue that, as I have already mentioned, was identified in the Commission of Audit. It has been the single biggest announcement in any government department in the Treasurer Tim Nicholl's first budget to provide this resourcing for our state schools. I have no doubt that it has contributed to a return of confidence in a system that, when I inherited the portfolio or when I came to the portfolio, seemed to have an inexorable decline in state schooling enrolment compared to non-state schooling. Again, this is no criticism of non-state schooling alternatives. But I do not want state schooling, and did not want, and neither does my department want state schooling to be seen as the option you only go to when you have no choice.

I came from a state school background myself and a school that turned 50 years old last year—Sunnybank State High School. When I have been back there, many of the blocks are still the same as when I was there. But in some schools many of them have been boarded up and closed off, and that is not something I think that we want to see in our state schooling system. So it has been a significant commitment for which I am very appreciative. I know the department is and I know that our parents and teachers and principals are as well.

CHAIR: I call the member for Redlands.

Mr DOWLING: I realise, Minister, that you have touched on this before in previous answers. With reference to page 7 of the SDS, could you provide some examples of how schools in 2013-14 were able to use the \$100 million invested in clearing the schools maintenance backlog?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member. I think one of the best examples in this committee process is to be able to tell members about educational programs that we have actually seen—whether it is regional directors, whether it is senior executives in my department, or whether it is me as minister or you as local members—and I certainly value that opportunity to go to schools to see exactly what is happening with our educational programs. But similarly when I have travelled the state I remember seeing at Proserpine State High School that they had a significantly older block where they had old style wooden windows and, because of the way the money had been allocated in the past under the former government's procurement methods, there was no way they were allowed to apply any money they received because the windows could not necessarily be replaced.

Thankfully, through us working through our infrastructure department, we have said we need to make sure that if we are asking principals to be autonomous they should be able to work with their local community to identify whatever it is that they need to do to improve their school, including giving them some flexibility about the maintenance backlog. So if it could be arranged, they could say, 'Here is something that is on the backlog and therefore I have to do it, but I think there is something else that I would like to do that will actually help my school in another way without ignoring that identified problem.' We have had officials from my department, from the regional offices, who go out to work with them to make sure that they can get the best bang for their buck. So I remember, on the northern tour that I did, going to Proserpine State High School and seeing this older block and seeing that they were able to paint the building and change the windows, and they are going to have a lot more longevity than those older wooden style windows which were all breaking and badly affected.

Some other examples are the Dalby State High School in the honourable member's electorate, the Bunya campus. It had a 2011-12 maintenance liability of \$263,901. During our Advancing Our Schools Maintenance initiative, they received \$263,879, including \$3,333 of minor works. The school is maintained by Building and Asset Services, so they have chosen to do that. That is a business unit within the Department of Housing and Public Works. I think you have seen Bunya campus and you have said it is really quite impressive to see how good it looks.

Greenvale State School had a 2011 maintenance liability of \$412,000. They have received \$268,444, including \$2,018 of minor works. That is a direct to market school. Then there is Nerang State High School, which is in the south-east region and obviously in the electorate of Gaven. It received \$466,476—these are significant amounts of money, honourable members—including \$43,748 in special maintenance and \$6,506 of minor works. It is a direct to market school that also

participated in the School Maintenance Investment Program for 2011-12 which helped address the 2011-12 backlog. These are schools that were receiving \$10,000 to \$15,000, as a rough guide, often for maintenance.

One example that I am also reminded of that I saw on that trip as well some time ago was Hermit Park State School in Townsville. They have a very big computer program, but in terms of their maintenance they were able to cluster with about three or four other schools, and that was where they ascertained an increase in how much they were able to get done by about 20 per cent compared to what they had been able to get done in the past. So they are some practical examples of how this government is working with our schools and giving communities what they want so they can get those better outcomes scholastically as well.

CHAIR: I call the member for Condamine.

Mr HOPPER: Minister, I have met with a constituent on a number of occasions. I have given this constituent all the promises and statements. I heard the statements you made about school closures this morning. But I did promise this constituent that I would ask this question at estimates: is Wyreema State School definitely taken off the hit list?

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes. Yes, it is. So I can assure that constituent who hopefully will be reading this, just as I have reassured that community, that that was an example of the Schools Planning Commission working with the local council to say, 'There is obviously going to be more housing development and growth than we had prospectively anticipated when we did our viability.' That is why we look forward to that area growing. The Mayor of Toowoomba mentioned that to me as well during the rundown when I was at the training awards in Toowoomba around this time last year. We were pleased to make that decision. I can reassure all of those parents in that community that there are no intentions to put that school back on that list.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you for that answer.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I just interrupt quickly to say that Patrea Walton has the schools of distance education GRG. I think there was an amount given for the Brisbane School of Distance Education. It was taken as a question on notice prior to lunch. If you do not mind, we would like to provide that information now.

Ms Walton: For the Brisbane School of Distance Education, the initial estimation of payment was \$289,004, but the final amount paid based on February enrolments was \$286,372. For the Cairns School of Distance Education, the initial estimate was \$56,057, but the final amount paid was an increase of \$60,896. For the Capricornia School of Distance Education, the initial estimate was \$42,401, but the final payment was \$42,719. For the Charleville School of Distance Education, the estimate based on the 2013 enrolment was \$32,305, but the final figure based on 2014 enrolments was \$33,367. For the Charters Towers School of Distance Education, the initial estimate was \$83,422, but the final payment was \$75,080. For the Longreach School of Distance Education, the initial estimate was \$34,154, but the final payment was \$31,552. For the Mount Isa School of the Air, the initial estimate was \$46,068, but the final payment was \$41,461.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Walton.

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Chair, can I also give some more information to the honourable member for Condamine about the McKinlay shire Julia Creek school issue that he raised with me on behalf of the member for Mount Isa. I just want to briefly go back to a release by the McKinlay shire by Mayor Belinda Murphy, who I mentioned had been to see me about this. Their release said—

Council will be fully subsidising the service's operational costs and any upgrades required to the existing room. There will be a fee for parents. However, this has been limited.

So this is some information that I think the honourable member asked for on behalf of the member for Mount Isa—about \$60,000 for a teacher. That was their own release saying that they, the council, were prepared to subsidise that, as has happened in Thargomindah, where, as I understand it, we provide distance education but the council have provided a classroom. I have mentioned the distance education support. The government are prepared to still give subsidies for geographically isolated students under the ICT subsidy scheme. We will continue to pay that via the Mount Isa School of the Air for students at the Julia Creek year 7 remote learning facility. As for the Thargomindah model, the department will provide and meet the cost of cleaning, utilities and telecommunications. I just wanted to put all of that on the record. We will continue to work with Mayor Belinda Murphy and that community to make sure we get the best outcomes for those students.

CHAIR: I call the member for Redcliffe.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you, Chair. Minister, my question is in relation to the construction of new schools. It is noted in the SDS, in relation to the capital program and also in relation to the response to the question of notice, that 10 schools have been announced to be built over the next five years. All of those schools are to be constructed in South-East Queensland. My question to you, Minister, is: are there any schools to be built outside of South-East Queensland over the next five years?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question, because it leads straight into something that the honourable member asked me about before lunch. It is about the Schools Planning Commission. One of the issues that I inherited was not just a lack of willingness from prior ministers to look at school viability, but also a very ad hoc planning process that meant that in 2014 the state has not opened any schools at all. I am sure honourable members can understand that you do not get into government in 2012 and say what the forward planning is, given that the out years or the years of the budget are four years from when that budget is announced. The planning for schools in 2014 should have happened some time before 2012. In my first year as a minister we did open some of the final schools from the original Labor government's PPP. That was seven schools. One of the first schools I visited was Murrumba Secondary College. There was also Brightwater State School on the Sunshine Coast. In fact, most of those seven schools were in South-East Queensland as well.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, I really hesitate to cut you short, but I am just very mindful of time. I am more interested in knowing whether there is any planning for new schools over the next five years.

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, there is. I thank the honourable member for that guidance. One of the ones that we promised that we are going to deliver for next year is Highfields State School, in Toowoomba. That will be opening next year. That is the eleventh school. Of course, we announced the release of 16 more maps today and the Schools Planning Commission advice will subsequently inform us about where we are going to have to build schools into the future, as a guide to 2021 and then to 2031. There are other areas of the state, though. I know that Townsville has a lot of need. It is important to get the planning process right and that is what we have done with the Schools Planning Commission.

I can advise the honourable member that, for the first time ever, the Schools Planning Commission has released 30 maps. It is the 90th percentile area of top growth in Queensland. We will now work on that, having made the short-term provision for the next three to four years to also enhance some of the infrastructure in existing schools. We know that we can do more about improving some of their existing infrastructure, but also using relocatables and making sure that some of the spaces that are being used at the moment can be used in different ways. We are working with all of our principals to make sure that we work on their infrastructure plans, so we do not have to use enrolment management plans in the way that we have in the past. Dave O'Hagan, do you want to add something quickly for the benefit of the honourable member?

Mr O'Hagan: Yes, thank you, Minister. I am David O'Hagan, the Acting Deputy Director-General for Corporate Services. As the minister said, those existing 10 PPPs and Highfields have stages going out now to January 2019. As far as the work of the planning commission, DETE itself has a 20-year demand map. It looks at the enrolment forecasts from the government statistician and it has looked at some of those high-growth areas. In consultation with the Schools Planning Commission, sitting down with the Catholic and independent sectors, we have been looking at the needs and the requirements for new schools over the two periods, estimated out to 2021 and then beyond to 2031. Given that we as a department have something like 68 per cent of schools across the sectors, that means that where the planning commission has identified between 40 to 48 new schools required by 2021 and then other schools required out to 2031, out of those 30 high-growth areas we will be looking at possible school options and new school builds going out. Inside the maps the members will be able to see that we have taken into account the existing capacity of schools in those particular areas. The maps will say there is existing capacity that will meet the need out to 2021, or there could be a requirement for one or two new primary schools in a particular area, depending on the enrolment growth expected. Also, there is a process in the department to renew its demand mapping every year. Again, that is the work of the commission. That style of work about looking at those enrolment forecasts will be done on an annual basis. One of the things we had a look at is where there are proposed developments, and this is in consideration with local councils. Depending on when those local developments actually get approved and when they come on can affect those numbers. Again, we need to do that annual review.

Ms D'ATH: If I can go back to my original question, Minister, with the planning commission and any recommendations of additional schools, and you have said 90 per cent of the growth is in those regions, would any new schools be built before 2019 outside of the 10 you have already announced in South-East Queensland, and you have just mentioned Toowoomba?

Mr LANGBROEK: Highfields, yes. I want to clarify: 90 per cent of the growth is in the 30 areas that we have identified in the Schools Planning Commission maps. Some of those areas are not in South-East Queensland. Of course, in the short term we have turned our minds to announcing the 10 PPPs and now we will turn to building schools over time in those other areas as well.

Ms D'ATH: Does that mean there may be new schools built before 2019 in the region or any planning you do will come after the 10? Any construction of schools will come after the ones that have already been announced?

Mr LANGBROEK: Planning is an ongoing process. Again, it would be imprudent to not do any planning based on what the Schools Planning Commission says, having now provided us with those maps. We will make sure that we go away, work with them and work with local councils, to make sure that if there is a really implicit need for a school very quickly then we will obviously work across all sectors to sort out where we will do that.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, was it the Queensland Schools Planning Commission that recommended that the initial 10 schools all be in South-East Queensland or was that a government decision?

Mr LANGBROEK: As I understand it, the Schools Planning Commission's first maps confirmed some of the information we already had that those were the areas where those schools were needed. So the Schools Planning Commission helped to validate the data that the department already had and those 10 schools were in those areas of high growth.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, can I take you to the first report of the Queensland Schools Planning Commission. It specifically states in that report that the commission has not undertaken an analysis of the need for special assistance schools or schools providing special education, due to the small cohorts of students being provided those specialist services. I ask: if the Queensland Schools Planning Commission is not looking at special education schools, and I have only had a chance to have a very quick glimpse at the second report but could not find any reference to special schools, has the department undertaken any detailed analysis of special school needs and is there any planning to have any new special schools in Queensland?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. The answer is definitely yes. It is something that I came back to my department with after I did the Stretton principal round table and was asked exactly the same question: 'Is there planning for special schools?' Of course, we have about 4,000 students in special schools in Queensland and we know that we need to have appropriate planning. I know that the Beenleigh Special School is one where they are absolutely passionate, but the site that they are on is a very difficult site. Cairns, of course, is one where planning is ongoing because there is no facility in Far North Queensland for special schooling. I will ask the director-general, because I came back very specifically to say that there needs to be some reassurance, given what the planning commission has said in that first report.

Dr Watterston: As Mr O'Hagan said, along with the Schools Planning Commission looking at the SA3s, the strategic area 3s, that we are talking about and that the minister has referred to, our department has always been demand mapping and looking at requirements and needs going forward on a one-to-five-year basis and then up to a 20-year basis as well. Certainly in the 15 months that I have been in the department, there has been a review of those schools looking at that demand mapping based on some of the plans that have come through from the planning commission. From a special school point of view, we are looking at that demand. Parents have a choice, so predicting that demand is also difficult within that environment, because not all students with a disability will end up in a special school. As the minister has already alluded to, there is pressure and there are demands. We are assessing those demands at the moment.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, you mentioned Cairns special school or a potential Cairns special school. Can you advise how much of the \$500,000 funding grant under the 2013-14 budget has been expended on the planning of that school? Has any been deferred into the 2014-15 year? If not, what funding has been allocated to finish that planning?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is something I have already mentioned, that I know the previous Labor government made this promise on the eve of an election and we are determined to continue the planning process. I can certainly provide you with the details when they come to hand or Dave O'Hagan or the director-general may be able to provide them. When we have had cabinets in Cairns, that issue has been raised with me. I know that it is a significant issue locally. We are continuing to work with the local community to make sure that we plan for this appropriately and that we deliver it. I will ask the director-general to provide some detail.

Dr Watterston: Through the minister, we are going to have to take that on notice just to give you an exact representation of what has been spent from that budget allocation. We just do not have that at the moment.

Ms D'ATH: In clarifying that, can you outline how much has been allocated in the 2014-15 year and also when that planning review is due for completion?

Dr Watterston: Sure.

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

Ms D'ATH: Minister, I would like to take you to the teacher recruitment for independent public schools and page 5 of the SDS referring to school education. Specifically, Minister, as you are aware the independent public schools have the right to recruit any teacher in the state. As most independent public schools are situated in South-East Queensland, there will be a greater pull of teachers to South-East Queensland. Can the minister advise if there has been any difficulty in attracting teachers to state schools in regional Queensland?

Mr LANGBROEK: This is an interesting question, because we want to ensure that no schools are disadvantaged in terms of being able to attract teachers. The director-general, some staff and I went to Western Australia to see some of the impacts of independent public schools there, as of course they have been doing it for some years before us. One of the benefits that they have seen is that, in some of those regional schools that become IPSs, they have been able to attract teachers when they were never able to attract them, that is, in some of the far-flung areas. I will ask either the director-general or Dave O'Hagan to give you some specific detail.

This is something I committed to as the new minister when it was first raised with me, and it continues to be raised as a prospective issue that the transfer system would be affected. It is certainly something that is top of mind for me whenever we talk about IPSs, especially if they end up being clustered in an area where there is not an alternative to an IPS or there are not a couple of schools, and if people from regional areas who have done country service, as we might have called it in the old days, deserve and want to come back to the metropolitan region or the north coast region. I have always made sure that I have reassured teachers in groups or principals that, whilst principals really value the ability to be able to choose their staff, they cannot fire. They can hire, but they cannot fire. I have also been at great pains to always make sure that within the department we have some sort of HR protections to make sure that we do not have people excluded from getting back to a metropolitan area, which they deserve to come if that is what they choose, but also to make sure that we do not have trouble staffing in the regional areas. I will pass over to the director-general first, who can give you some detail.

Ms D'ATH: Just on that point, Minister: Director-General, can you advise in your response and in further expanding on that, based on this being an issue the minister is well aware of and has been overseeing closely, I assume there is data being collected on how many vacancies are occurring in IPSs and whether those vacancies are being filled through the transfer list or through other means?

Dr Watterston: Sure. There is data and we will endeavour to get that while I give you the overview about these issues. I am a Western Australian, so I have worked most of my life in that system. I have watched the IPS initiative grow in a way that has probably brought to bear some considerations for us in Queensland about how we want to evolve the IPS system. As the minister said, we both went to Western Australia last year to talk to the minister and the director-general about the changes that have occurred across the system.

While there are many benefits, from an outcome point of view Western Australia can point to that initiative as being certainly a contribution to the improved outcomes. The issue is around staffing, so at some point with the Independent Public Schools initiative you get to a tipping point where, once you have a certain number, staffing does become difficult. As the minister has already pointed out, and as I was well aware from Western Australia and now in Queensland, there are hard-to-staff schools. People need to have some security about having a career pathway that will enable them to not be caught in remote areas or difficult-to-staff schools for the rest of their career.

We are currently undergoing a policy planning process at the moment to look at what we want to evolve our system into. We have not come to any outcomes yet, but we are consulting with all stakeholders, including the QTU, about what would be the appropriate number of IPS schools within this system to still maintain the balance of being able to bring teachers back on a pathway that enables them to make a choice, but also at the same time enables all schools to have quality staff. We are really keen to put some policies in place that enable the best of both worlds, if you like.

Deputy Director-General Patrea Walton and I meet regularly with the 80 IPS schools that are now in place. They are a very collaborate, collegiate group who understand this problem as well. I am not going to give you any outcomes that those people have agreed to, but we have had tentative discussions about their role in making sure that they can also provide pathways for teachers that are coming from rural and remote locations. There is a sense amongst that group that they do have a role to play. Whether we will have quotas or work out a system where they will also be able to provide those pathways is part of the policy planning process as we go forward. But there is no doubt that, as a principal, being an IPS school does provide you with an opportunity to have all of the levers in play, if you like, in terms of trying to bring about the best outcomes that you can.

The foundation of this whole issue that has brought forward the IPS movement is about a quality teaching workforce, so we do not want to throw out the baby with the bathwater. We do not want to leave teachers high and dry. But at the same time, we want to make sure that schools have access to the best teachers possible. There is a balance to be gained there, and I do think not reaching that tipping point where the system has two discrete HR functions, non-IPS schools versus the IPS schools, is really important for us, and that is the planning we are undertaking now.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. Can I ask if it is possible under an IPS school, with the autonomy that is being given to principals, for an IPS school to decide, for example, that they no longer want a head of special education services and instead want to use that funding to employ a second deputy principal? Do they have that sort of discretion?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. They are the sorts of things that were raised with me as impediments or reasons why a school should not become an IPS. I will let the Director-General speak about the specifics, but the reason I would say that that would not be the case or that they would not be able to do that would be because they have to do what their community wants and needs. Because they are working with their school council, there also is a level of HR that they do not necessarily change. There are base HR numbers. They do not fire a member; they can hire. But anything that they choose to do, if it is not in collaboration with their school council and their school community—and if they had students then who were in need of a head of special education and they did not have it—it would obviously not be particularly well received by the school, and they would not have made that decision without consulting with the school community.

So in answer to your question, I would say that it is technically possible, but probably improbable because that would be a principal who is supposed to be in very close contact with their community who would be doing something that the community would find abhorrent.

Dr Watterston: In terms of practice, that is already in place. We do staff schools based on a formula, and those formulas do not change for IPS schools. Where the opportunity arises for an IPS school is perhaps to redirect the work for some of those positions. So as the Minister talked about, having HOSEs or perhaps coaches within classrooms, it is quite possible to change a teaching position, for example, or an administrative teaching position into a role that did not exist prior to the school becoming IPS. So it is not about changing the profile of the position, but perhaps redirecting the work and focusing more on the outcomes that the strategies that they have employed are seeking to gain. In that sense some schools have changed the roles within the structure, but the structure is inherently still in place. Does that makes sense to you?

Ms D'ATH: I will go to a different topic, and that is the Student First funding. I am just seeking a point of clarification from the Minister. I know in the Great Results Guarantee document that it states the break-up of the \$131 million. I think it is \$99 million going to primary schools focused on prep to 2, and then a proportion going to secondary schools and a smaller proportion going to special schools. Do I take it from reading that breakdown of the funding that there is not additional funding for primary schools for years 3 to 7 in the 2013-14 budget?

Dr Watterston: No. The focus of the Great Results Guarantee, as you are aware, is to ensure that by year 3 all students meet the national minimum standard in terms of the NAPLAN test or that we have a plan in place. And it is really important to stress the 'or', because it is quite probable in most schools that that is not going to be the case. The real emphasis about the Great Results Guarantee is to make sure that you, as a parent, have security to understand that the school has diagnosed whatever challenges are in place for particular students and that they are addressing those challenges and the parents are aware of those challenges.

So I think that's the beauty, and that is what makes this Great Results Guarantee quite unique nationally. I do not think there is any other state or territory in Australia that can claim to at least be able to diagnose the challenges that are being faced by a student in the early years and being able to

address them. Now, addressing those challenges takes expertise and takes additional work, I guess, but that is really what we are asking schools to do, is upskill and be to be able to develop the competency or to be able to seek the expertise that will enable you to do that. That is a bit of work and it is not related to your question, but still material to the Great Results Guarantee.

The funding is allocated to the primary school, and the primary school needs to be able to demonstrate that they met that guarantee by the end of the year using the funds that they have got, but it does not preclude them from using the funding anywhere in the school. You would be well aware that some of those strategies that are in place about improving the capacity of teachers to be able to implement contemporary literacy programs would apply right across the school, and the professional development will be for all teachers of literacy. So no, we are not quarantining the funds from prep to year 3, but we are asking for the guarantee to be put in place by year 3. In some schools that will be a greater challenge than others, depending on the performance of the school and the student cohort. It goes back to the point that I have made a couple of times today and the minister has emphasised about the autonomy of the school leadership and the school staff to be able to make those decisions that best suit that environment. Providing they can bring about the guarantee—and that is, as I said before, understand what the needs are of students that have not perhaps kept pace with the rest of the cohort—but investing the funds in ways that are going to improve outcomes for all.

I just want to make one other point about this that we have not made yet about this Great Results Guarantee. Our secondary schools have been the most sophisticated professional association that I have been aware of in Australia. Their acceptance and agreement about the way we have apportioned the money is quite amazing really because, as you stated, it is about \$29 million to \$30 million that goes into secondary schools and \$99 million that goes into primary schools. It goes back to the earlier conversation that punctuated most of our questions this morning about early childhood. There are two phases of early childhood: zero to four or five, which is that sort of development area; but then from a school perspective there is prep to year 3, which is what we consider early childhood to be.

We do not have to rehash everything we said this morning about research, but we know that if you invest the money at the early end then you will make the biggest difference. So for retention in year 12, probably the best strategy we can have is to invest the \$99 million into the Great Results Guarantee in the primary schools. There are two points there: one is about the sophistication and expertise in secondary school leadership, but the other is about the cycles of government. In Queensland it is a three-year cycle. This government or the next government, should it change, and the government after that, are not really going to see a full return on the investment for this Great Results Guarantee funding. I think what I am most pleased about as the director-general of this department is that we are prepared to go for the long-term here. It is a bit like Finland, where there have been four or five government changes over the last 15 or 16 years, but they have stayed the course. So with the accord summit that is going to take place on 25 September, I think there is a real opportunity for us, through initially this Great Results Guarantee, to stay the course and really put in place some strategies that will enable us to bring about some long-term outcomes.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you, Director-General. I just wanted to clarify—I think it was taken on a question on notice through the Minister—that the department will get a list of the vacancies of IPS schools that have been filled through the transfer lists.

Dr Watterston: Absolutely.

Ms D'ATH: Can I also ask that it also identify the number of classified officer positions that have been vacant and also the number of classified officer positions that were filled by relocation? That's IPS schools.

Dr Watterston: Which have been vacant and filled as opposed to—

Ms D'ATH: Through relocation, yes.

Dr Watterston: Yes, yes.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you.

Dr Watterston: Absolutely.

CHAIR: That is a question on notice. Minister, you are happy to take that question on notice?

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, I am happy to take it on notice.

CHAIR: Thank you. I will now call the member for Logan.

Mr PUCCI: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS following the introduction of the Great Teachers = Great Results. I know you have explained a lot about the autonomy that principals and teachers have in schools, but maybe you could expand more on how our principals and teachers are now more empowered than they were prior to the introduction of this initiative to make decisions about discipline in schools.

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. When we speak about the government's focus on outcomes, there are three main ways that we think that we can achieve this through data and research. When we ask parents what they think is the most important thing in the classroom, they will say the person standing in front of their student. The second issue that we have identified as very, very important for getting better outcomes is autonomy—and we have just had a significant discussion about Independent Public Schools—but in all of our schools, giving our principals and teachers the freedom to bring in the things that will make the greatest difference to them in terms of getting results. The third aspect is we know that if we ask parents, 'What else do you think can make a difference in the classroom?' they will not say 'curriculum'; they will say 'behaviour and discipline'. Kids cannot learn if there are children in the classroom who are disruptive and therefore making it difficult for other children to concentrate on the work that they are doing. So to that end we have had significant reforms in education. We announced in Great Teachers = Great Results that we would strengthen discipline in Queensland state schools as a key area for reform. We did that subsequently in the parliament with a bill to strengthen discipline—to have new behaviour contracts called Discipline Improvement Plans introduced with students and their families. It was really about making sure that principals were not fighting with one hand tied behind their back. Some students were taking advantage of the situation, knowing that they could only receive a half-hour detention at lunchtime or an hour after school. We wanted to put the power back in the hands of principals.

Having said that, we also wanted to make sure that if a student was either suspended, excluded, or getting to those options, we would not just boot them out so that they would see having had a suspension or an exclusion as a badge of honour. Teenagers going through troubled times may sometimes see those sorts of things as: they just hate the system, they hate school and they do not want to be there. We want to make sure that they are given a chance to become productive citizens by providing alternative schooling for them and making sure that we support them and hopefully get them back into the regular schooling system. We have said that we know that children and young people need assistance to develop self-discipline as part of their social development and to achieve their academic and personal goals. The action plan affirms the positions of principals as leaders of school communities and provides them with greater autonomy and greater flexibility. It gives principals increased flexibility to act at their discretion in ways appropriate to the needs of their local community. It is balanced with clear expectations for strong, fair and consistent approaches. It enables principals to use a wider range of strategies such as community service interventions and Saturday detentions to improve discipline before resorting to measures such as suspension and exclusion.

Before I let the deputy director-general, Patea Walton, speak, I just want to tell you about three quick examples where I have seen it in action. At Loganlea State High School, which is a school that has a big farming element to it, and lots of kids there do cert IIIs and cert IIs in agricultural practice, they had a student some time ago who if in the old days had let off a fire extinguisher and ruined everything would just be suspended. Instead of doing that, the principal said, 'I am going to have you come back and I want you to work with those farm workers in the school community who you have affected through what you did through some childish lark and set off the fire extinguisher instead of suspending you for three or four days'. The parents in that community have been very happy with that.

The second example is Kirwan State High School where I was only a couple of weeks ago. They run a Saturday detention. We were originally told that people will not volunteer or will not do that Saturday morning detention. The senior leadership group is under John Livingston at Kirwan. The deputy principal responsible told me they ran a Saturday detention for six students and a seventh parent brought their student along because her son had wagged school on the Thursday or Friday and she wanted him to learn that his responsibility was that he should not do it and he should come to Saturday detention.

The third example is Southport State High where they have over 190 students. The principal there says, 'I don't want to take away from your teaching and learning time. We will do Saturday morning'. For example, if they ride to school without a helmet, they will make them come in and they come in and they do a Department of Transport traffic program where they learn about some of those

things. But it is not punitive. It is not saying you have been bad. It is about saying we value you, we care for you but we need to make sure you are responsible for your actions. They are three examples in different parts of the state where principals have gotten on board with this and they are saying that they are certainly seeing some great effects. Patrea?

Ms Walton: If I could just go further to an example at Southport State School. It is a very good example of a school that has embraced the new strategies under the legislative changes. That school particularly is offering out-of-school-hours detentions and community service interventions to address behaviours of students. A remarkable statistic from that school is that of the 96 students, at the time the information was provided to me, who have been engaged in out-of-school-hours detentions or community service interventions not one of those students has engaged in those behaviours which resulted in the intervention—not one. That is an extraordinary result. So, 96 students have avoided suspension or possibly even worse as a result of these interventions.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr LANGBROEK: That is Southport State High, I think, by the way.

CHAIR: They are some excellent figures. Minister, with respect to page 4 of the SDS again, can you please update the committee on the progress of the independent review of Queensland's senior assessment and tertiary entrance processes and when, if at all, Queensland students will be affected by any changes flowing from the review recommendations?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question, Madam Chair. I know this has been a subject that, if one thinks about it, in this government we have had very, very few reviews by parliamentary committees in areas as significant as this. I know that the review of maths and science assessment was one that occupied the committee's time a lot last year and it certainly has informed the government and will inform this review of the senior assessment and tertiary entrance processes. It was the recommendations that came from this committee that have been referred to Professor Geoff Masters and Dr Gabrielle Matters who are conducting the review on behalf of ACER. As many people are aware, the government has commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research, ACER, to conduct a major independent review of Queensland school assessment and tertiary entrance processes. The reason we have done it is because we have a system that is over 20 years old. The OP system was brought in in the early 1990s and we do not necessarily think that it reflects the best 21st century practice. Many kids are not doing an OP. We have less than 50 per cent or just on 50 per cent of kids who are doing an OP, which was really only about giving them an overall position to make a tertiary entrance score. So what we are doing is we are considering the effectiveness of existing Queensland processes. In fact, I am going to read this because I don't want the words, if I was to speak off-the-cuff, to be misinterpreted. In this sector, where this is such an emotive debate, I think I am going to read this very carefully so that we have no doubt about what I am actually saying and I don't have my words interpreted in a way that will mean it will need more explanation. It will provide recommendations to support robust contemporary senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems that meet the needs of Queensland school students. The review will also consider a number of recommendations arising from the parliamentary Education and Innovation Committee report into senior assessment in mathematics, chemistry and physics subjects. Four of the committee's 16 recommendations were referred for consideration as part of the ACER review. Proposals for fundamental systemic change, such as introduction of senior external examinations, are receiving further expert consideration through the independent review process. ACER is well advanced in the review process. It has held a number of consultation forums with key stakeholder groups, conducted an online public survey into aspects of the existing system and received written submissions from stakeholders and the broader community. The reviewers have published a broad outline of possible future directions that are being considered as part of the review process. This includes using a combination of internal/external assessment for senior school subjects and transitioning away from the overall position, OP, tertiary entrance system. ACER is due to provide a final review report to me soon after 31 July 2014 and after considering the findings our government will provide its own response to the review. The timing of any changes will be carefully considered to ensure that senior students are able to appropriately plan their senior school and post schooling pathways.

So, Madam Chair, I do want to extemporise a little bit here just to say that any information, given that the government has said we have no firm views about what should happen in this system, that is why we are leaving it to the experts, we will then take their recommendations and look at it as a government, working through with all the stakeholders, but that no change will happen for anyone unless they are in grade 9 this year prospectively when they could face a difference when they get to

2016 which would be when they get to grade 11. When I have announced anything to do with this over the last couple of years I have had parents ringing me as they get into their cars with their children saying, 'I just heard the minister speaking about a prospective change to the OP system. Will that affect me?' We will make sure that it is well announced, well funded and any announcements that are made are well communicated to everyone so that we don't have any uncertainty. And nor should we be questioning the robustness of this system that we currently have. Yes, we have concerns that maybe it isn't the best fit in a technological world where so much has changed over the last five years—let alone 25 years, that maybe we could be doing better and we could be looking to lead the rest of the nation in terms of some of the proposals. People have suggested to me that the ATAR score that is used in three other states is supposedly the Holy Grail. Well, it is not, Madam Chair, because those three states all come about their ATAR score in different ways. Queensland has always been very upfront about speaking about how we come up with our scores. Other states have not necessarily been as upfront. And whilst some people are asking us to just automatically bring in external exams, I want to be at great pains to point out that the consideration of external assessment, which I have already mentioned in this answer, does not rule in or out any of those things automatically. All of these consequences, Chris Rider, who is the CEO of the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, will have to administer because it is that authority that is responsible for testing and assessment and at the moment tertiary entrance, as well as curriculum and syllabus, are going to have to work very strongly to make sure that any system that adjusts our current moderation system is properly communicated to schools, just as some of the very clear findings from this committee were communicated to schools. The CEO, Chris Rider, has come to me a number of times to point out what has been done in schools to make sure that people in the maths, physics and science areas were properly communicated about those written reports that students had to do that so many of you heard maybe had been over-exaggerated in their importance when they should have been doing physics or maths.

That is an example of this government listening and consulting but not necessarily expressing a predetermined view, no matter how passionate that view may be expressed by people who think that we should go a certain way. This is a government that relies on data to fund outcomes; outcomes we believe come from doing things that rely on data, similarly with any OP review or any review of senior assessment. I hope I have been as clear as I can in that regard, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, minister, and we particularly appreciate that answer because, as you said, it is very pertinent to this particular committee. I now call the member for Albert?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I know that the Albert electorate certainly has benefited from the increased prep teacher aide hours. Are you able to set out why prep teacher aides play such an important role in the formative years of our children's education and how do they contribute to the improvements in student outcomes?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. We have spoken a lot today about the early years, both in early childhood for pre-prep programs, early years for the Great Results Guarantee, which is specific funding given to primary schools for the preps to year 2s but, of course, prep teacher aides play a very, very important role as well in our prep rooms and that is something that the government has been proud to deliver: 2,250 hours over each of the last two years and then, of course, this year another 2,250 hours for next year that we announced just a couple of weeks ago. In the member's electorate of Albert I can confirm that in 2013-14 an additional 104.8 hours was provided to schools in Albert; Mount Warren Park, 20.8; Pimpama State School, 19.2; Upper Coomera State College, 25.4; and Windaroo State School, 39.4. It was interesting relatively recently when, with the member for Waterford, we attended one of the schools in his electorate which was—

Mr LATTER: Edens Landing.

Mr LANGBROEK: Edens Landing school. I was very interested as we went there to comment as I did about the state of maintenance around the school. It was interesting to hear again the balance between the value that principals find in something like prep teacher aide extra hours being given as opposed to the maintenance facility. I think that that is something that we need to keep stressing, Madam Chair, that sometimes principals, I think, may have this expectation, or may have had in the past, 'Well, maintenance and infrastructure are not really anything to do with me, I'm just concerned with the people.' We have tried to find a balance between making sure that we are providing more resources in terms of employment, in this case the people who are actually in the classroom, but that we also had a significant amount of maintenance put into Edens Landing, just as we had for all of these schools, but sometimes after a while that sort of thing can be taken for granted.

That is why we are at great pains to point out that the maintenance backlog, in conjunction with the prep teacher aide hours, have been things that have made a massive difference in this department across 1,233 schools. It is important that we do not forget what those schools may have been like in terms of condition, whether it is in the Premier's electorate of Ashgrove where he and I have been a number of times to see how appreciative schools in that electorate are or, as I have mentioned, in my own electorate or those of members opposite. That was interesting at that particular school. But of course we know that teacher aides, of whom we have about 14,000 in our system, contribute to the provision of a quality educational service. I have seen them in those schools at Edens Landing, of course, and at the Sunshine Coast where we made a similar announcement and at Burleigh State School which is my alma mater where we recognised two teacher aides who had a combined teaching service of over 40 years. That was only a couple of weeks ago. It was nice to acknowledge how much they support teachers. When you walk into a classroom you do not necessarily look into the corner and know who is the teacher and who is the teacher aide. They are often working in small groups and it is really important to acknowledge the support of our teacher aides with the preparation and enhancement of learning materials and associated activities.

There are thousands of preppies in state schools who are benefiting from the additional support available each day. We are making sure that an additional 471 prep classrooms in 127 schools will directly reap the rewards of extra teacher aide time in 2015. It has been through four years of boosting prep, \$54 million, 9,000 hours per week being provided, and this year marked the halfway point of the rollout with funding up to 4,500 hours already allocated.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That brings us to the conclusion of this part of the hearing, particularly in respect of the portfolio area of education. We will adjourn for 30 minutes until 3.15 and on our return consider the area of training and employment. I would like to thank the members of the department in the education sphere who have contributed today. I know it has been of great benefit to the committee and to the hearing today.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank any of those members who are leaving as well, on behalf of both me and the committee. I know that they have been able to provide some more information to the committee and I think that is really important as we examine the budget for 2014-15 and the outcomes for 2013-14. Thanks to them and to all members of the department who have helped to contribute to this process.

CHAIR: Absolutely. I concur with that. Thank you, Minister.

Proceedings suspended from 2.45 pm to 3.15 pm



CHAIR: The hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee is now resumed. We will now examine the portfolio areas of Training and Employment. I also welcome Ms Jodi Schmidt, the Chief Executive Officer of TAFE Queensland who, under schedule 7 of standing orders, may be asked questions directly by the committee. I will now call the member for Waterford.

Mr LATTER: As the minister is aware, I am very focused on ensuring that people in my electorate can undertake training that will lead to meaningful, sustainable employment. With respect to page 5 of the SDS, can you please outline how the introduction of full contestability for government training funding from 1 July 2014 through the 2014-15 VET investment plan will lead more people to gain skills that will lead to a job?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am going to defer to the assistant minister for technical and further education, who has been at the hearing all day but is going to provide an answer to this and I then might answer afterwards. Actually, I will come back to the assistant minister. The focus of the government's reform agenda for vocational education and training in Queensland as outlined in Great skills. Real opportunities has been to deliver full contestability for all government funded training and to align the skills produced through this investment with the jobs available in the economy. The 2014-15 VET investment plan, which was released on 9 June 2014, outlines the investment decisions for the coming year. The plan targets investment to the priority skills needed by the Queensland economy based on industry advice and has been informed through the Ministerial Industry Commission's inaugural Annual Skills Priority Report. The plan delivers on our commitment that all government funded training will be delivered contestably from 1 July 2014 with the majority also available on a demand driven basis. Queensland will have greater access to high quality training pathways that are directly linked to employment.

The advantages of the new VET investment plan and the fully contestable training market are many. Funding for vocational education and training is fully transparent for the first time in Queensland in terms of overall investment levels, priorities for funding and subsidies available to

students and industry. We are focusing investment on developing the skills needed by industry to enable them to grow their workforces, which were identified by industry through the processes established by the Ministerial Industry Commission. There is now a greater choice of registered training organisations and qualifications for individuals and employers enabling them to make informed decisions about the training pathway and provider that best meets their skills needs. This expanded choice will be available through a network of preapproved registered training organisations known as prequalified suppliers who will deliver quality training and assessment services that provide employment pathways for students and meet the skills needs of industry. It will provide assistance for disadvantaged learners to support them through their training to enable them to obtain their first certificate III guarantee by providing access to language, literacy and numeracy training, lower level qualifications at the certificate I and certificate II levels and other support services through the community learning initiative.

It does provide a solid foundation for the government to maximise outcomes for Queenslanders and address emerging economic needs, ensure equitable participation and optimise return on public investment. RTOs, registered training organisations, are required to submit industry validation regarding their capacity to deliver high quality training and assessment services before their status as a prequalified supplier can be approved. My department has a dedicated contract manager allocated for each prequalified supplier. This contract manager is responsible for monitoring performance under the agreement and associated policies. We will have regular reviews of prequalified supplier performance, data quality and performance against key performance indicators such as completion rates and employment outcomes achieved. We will also make sure that any quality issues are referred to the ASQA, Australian Skills Quality Authority, which is the national VET regulator operating under the auspices of the Australian government.

We are going to undertake regular performance reviews of investment in higher risk qualifications so that we do not oversupply skilled labour if we are at risk of doing so as well as potential areas of market failure where supply is expected to fall well short of demand. We also have a number of strategies that can be implemented where demand is forecast to exceed available budget. These strategies include reducing subsidy levels, suspending enrolments in targeted qualifications or removing targeted qualifications from the funded list.

The department has a market oversight function that will monitor significant trends within the demand driven skills market and provide advanced warning of potential risks to the department in terms of financial, communication or quality considerations. We believe that the benefits to Queensland are significant but we will need to remain vigilant as the training market matures and that public investment is targeted at the outcomes required by the state's economy. We want to make sure that our investment is contestable but targeted through targeted procurement processes as well as protecting disadvantaged learners, Indigenous Queenslanders, industry or regions.

What we are saying to the committee to give some extra information is that we need to make sure that, as a government, we are listening to industry instead of just providing courses that have been provided for a long time that are not necessarily leading to jobs. That is where providing this VET investment plan where everyone can have certainty about what are the qualifications that industry has said will lead to real jobs, we will not end up with the situation that we have often had where people are getting qualifications and then are doubly frustrated because they cannot get a job.

Mr DOWLING: Minister, with respect to page 3 of the Service Delivery Statements can you please outline how TAFE Queensland is now operating as an independent, commercially focused public provider and why this shift in approach was needed?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am going to ask the CEO of TAFE to come and speak to this because it is something that I think is very important for people to understand. We have endeavoured to make sure that all members of parliament understand the change under which TAFE is now operating. As the CEO of a statutory authority, we have made sure that we have an independent body outside DEET that has an independent and commercially focused board. So the challenges that were facing our training market were that there was a lack of clarity about the role of TAFE; there was a loss of market share to non-TAFE providers; they had an asset base that was not fit for purpose and an outdated industrial relations and employment model with complex decision-making environments and financial arrangements that limited reinvestment. We wanted to make sure that we had strong support for the public provider, notwithstanding that there are significant issues with their infrastructure and their industrial relations. Members will have heard me speak about that over the last couple of years. I am going to ask the CEO, having come from the

department and now being the inaugural CEO of TAFE Queensland, to expand a little on why we thought the shift in approach was needed and why we are already starting to see the benefits from the commercials, for example, that we are seeing about having an independent, commercially focused public provider.

Ms Schmidt: The Skills and Training Task Force of 2012 recommended the separation of TAFE Queensland from the department in order to facilitate the policy position of expanding a contestable training market in Queensland for a variety of reasons. One is to give TAFE Queensland its best chance to operate as a commercial entity in the market and to be responsive in that regard. As a large organisation, TAFE Queensland has to make decisions. As long as it is close to a department and needing to comply with all of the transparency arrangements—not to suggest that transparency is not our objective—that can slow down business decisions that need to be made close to the core of the service delivery, and therein lies a debate that has waged across the country in this sector around what are the appropriate governance arrangements for TAFE institutes. The government agreed to the recommendations made by the task force and moved to establish TAFE Queensland, which was undertaken. It began as an organisation on 1 July 2014. The staff have now transferred from the department under a transfer regulation and TAFE Queensland now begins to operate in line with those recommendations.

Mr Pucci: I refer to page 5 of the SDS. How is TAFE Queensland being supported in its transition to contestable arrangements to ensure that it is able to compete with private training organisations?

Mr Langbroek: I thank the honourable member for the question. I think it is also important to reassure the committee and anyone else who is following this particular aspect of education that TAFE Queensland is an integral part of Queensland's reform agenda for the vocational education and training sector. We aim to create a financially viable and commercially focused public provider. We have established TAFE Queensland as a strategic and commercially focused statutory body separate from the Department of Education, Training and Employment. That is why, as you just heard the CEO report and I think in a question on notice from the committee or in the SDS, you will see that that separation of people from the Department of Education, Training and Employment is explained in the footnotes—that those thousands of workers have gone to TAFE Queensland. Contemporary employment arrangements have been introduced to improve the productivity and responsiveness of the workforce and to address the major cost differential between TAFE and non-TAFE providers. A dedicated and separate owner of state training assets has been established to improve capacity utilisation, a state-owned training infrastructure and to generate a return on those assets to support future investments in this area.

Just by virtue of its history and its continued public ownership, TAFE Queensland operates under a number of conditions that restrict its ability to compete in the new contestable market. To that end, even though they have improved their efficiency significantly in recent years and will continue to do so under the new arrangements, to assist them to become competitive, given that I have already explained to the committee they had challenges with their infrastructure having to maintain their institutes around the state and also their industrial relations, the government provided financial support for 2014-15 of \$134 million within the VET investment plan for 2014-15, recognising they have a higher cost base; \$52.61 million to support rental and other costs associated with the establishment of the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority, QTAMA, which is of course under the Minister for Housing and Public Works, the Hon. Tim Mander; and some \$55 million to be finalised to support TAFE Queensland's corporate costs, which had previously been met by the Department of Education, Training and Employment. In total, therefore, TAFE Queensland will receive grant funding of over \$240 million in 2014-15. We want to allow them time to improve productivity and reduce their costs, and this will be reduced over time.

Mr Boothman: Minister, with respect to page 3 of the SDS, can you please advise how the Ministerial Industry Commission is creating better partnerships between government, industry and employers to identify skilling needs to inform government of funding priorities?

Mr Langbroek: I thank the honourable member. I am going to go to my Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education because the honourable member chairs the Ministerial Industry Commission. It was all about saying that, when we came in as a government if the industry was saying, 'We believe that if you were to do training in particular areas we can provide those people jobs,' we wanted to give industry a seat at the table to make sure we have this engagement with industry so that we can better target our training dollars. I will ask the assistant minister to expand.

Mrs RICE: As the minister has explained in a previous answer to a question, the creation of the Ministerial Industry Commission is the result of one of the recommendations of the Skills and Training Task Force. As he was just describing, that was with the very distinct purpose of creating a genuine partnership between industry, employers and government. With that in mind, he invited me to chair the Ministerial Industry Commission. The rest of the membership of the commission is made up of leaders from industry, business and academia. The commission has a clear mandate and that is to advise the Minister for Education, Training and Employment on Queensland's skills and workforce development priorities. It is to give industry and employers genuine opportunities to have input into how public training investment is made; to conduct regional industry forums to give small, medium and large industry a voice on local, regional and state skilling requirements; and to inform small, medium and large enterprises about the way that they can provide advice to the government.

In November 2013 the commission held its first meeting and on 31 March 2014 the commission presented its inaugural Annual Skills Priority Report to the minister. This report is the culmination of months of consultation with industry and represents the first significant step in delivering on the Queensland government's commitment to a genuine partnership with industry. The report identifies key trends across the Queensland economy, pinpointing the occupations that are growing and the skills required to fill them. An annual skills highlight report will be presented to the minister by 30 September 2014. This report will cover the key achievements of the commission and an assessment of how industry and employer advice has been used to inform the work of the commission and the Department of Education, Training and Employment. The key aspect here is that this is an ongoing annual process, our first Annual Skills Priority Report, fed directly into the minister's VET investment framework. Therefore, it has direct input into the relative priority of every qualification in Queensland.

As I mentioned, the process is ongoing. It is an annual process of engagement and consultation. Since the presentation of the first report, we have held industry forums on the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast and Toowoomba. Next month we will be holding another forum in Townsville followed by Cairns, and this is ensuring that the regions have a voice but also small and medium employers. As I say, this is able to provide ongoing advice to the minister, particularly where there may be issues arise that need a direct response. That advice is able to be provided to the minister outside of the Annual Skills Priority Report.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mrs Rice. Minister, with respect to page 5 of the SDS, can you please update the committee on the progress of the Great Skills, Real Opportunities five-year action plan and what practical benefits the rollout of this action plan is delivering for Queenslanders?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the chair for the question and I will again ask the assistant minister to report.

Mrs RICE: Thank you, Minister. For the committee's benefit, the whole of the Great Skills, Real Opportunities five-year action plan is the whole of the government's response to the Skills and Training Task Force report. As I am sure the committee would be familiar, this is an area over quite a number of years where there were numerous reviews and, I think much to the frustration of the sector, very little action was taken. So it is pleasing to report that with the five-year action plan that began from 1 July 2013—we are now just over one year in—there is quite a number of ways that this is delivering practical benefits for Queenslanders. As I mentioned, it was launched in June 2013 and all of the initiatives under the whole of the reform program are underway. One of the key ones, as I was just describing in the answer to the previous question, is the establishment of the Ministerial Industry Commission and it certainly is providing that direct advice to the minister around the skills needs across the state.

Under the VET investment plan, which is the follow-on from the Annual Skills Priority Report, the introduction of full contestability for public training investment has taken place from 1 July this year. This will further open the market to competition and provide students and employers with more training options than ever before. While moving to a fully contestable market will deliver a more efficient and effective training system, the design of the market also includes safeguards such as the right levers to apply incentives to control investment levels, to direct training to industry priorities, and to ensure quality outcomes. A new certificate III guarantee, which was established originally in the 2013-14 year through a contestable funding pool of approximately \$42 million, provides all Queenslanders with access to a government subsidised training place in priority training areas, up to and including their first certificate III. Complementing the guarantee, a new higher levels skills strategy is being introduced to provide Queenslanders with the opportunity to further develop their skills in priority certificate IV, diploma and advance diploma qualifications.

While we are reforming our funding strategies, we are also working hard to streamline the training system to simplify it and reduce red tape. On 8 May 2014 the new Further Education and Training Bill 2014 was passed, delivering a more contemporary apprenticeship and traineeship system to help increase commencements and completions. In terms of some of the practical ways the action plan is delivering for Queenslanders, I think it is worth noting a number of those aspects: from January 2014 year 12 graduates will be able to access fee-free training in priority courses through preapproved providers; in 2014-15 the Industry Partnerships Strategy, a strategic intervention to ensure the needs of industry and Queensland regions are met, will assist small to medium regional providers to develop workforce plans and access training; and the new registered trade skills pathway arrangements are being piloted in a range of industry sectors and provide a complementary trade pathway to the traditional apprenticeship. In addition, the \$47 million Community Learning program is a five-year program that funds partnerships between community based organisations and registered training organisations to provide training in qualifications up to certificate III. In 2013-14, 49 projects worth \$12.2 million have been approved and will deliver support to more than 3,900 people. In 2014-15, \$10 million in funding will be available.

Finally, there is the introduction of the Indigenous Training Strategy, which recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may need additional assistance to participate in training. This strategy will support projects that address areas of failure in the demand driven for skills market, align with identified economic activity and lead to jobs, have industry and local community support, and support VET participation for remote communities. There is also a number of aspects of the whole of the Great Skills, Real Opportunities five-year action plan that relates to our election commitment to achieve 10,000 additional apprenticeships and there is a \$10 million school to trade program as well as a \$3 million group training additional apprentice bonus to achieve that election commitment. As the minister has also described, there is also major reform underway to make TAFE Queensland a more competitive, responsive, innovative and flexible training provider.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mrs Rice.

Mr HOPPER: Minister, it is all very rosy, but some of the fees have gone up 300 per cent. There is a dramatic increase in TAFE fees. One student reported the fees for his course went up from \$625 to \$715. This is clearly a barrier to young people and unemployed people of all ages gaining valuable knowledge and skills to help them gain meaningful employment. Minister, recognising the Abbott government has proposed to prevent people under 30 gaining access to unemployment benefits for six months, the increase in TAFE fees for students is nothing short of devastating, especially for people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who are under 30. How does the minister intend to respond to this?

Mr PUCCI: Madam Chair, that question is full of inferences.

CHAIR: I would ask you to rephrase your question, member for Condamine.

Mr LANGBROEK: If the honourable member wants to ask me a question about increases in TAFE fees without all of the other aspects, including the Abbott government, I am happy to address it.

Mr HOPPER: I will ask the question again. Minister, TAFE fees in some cases have gone up 300 per cent. How are you going to address this?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is something that goes to the heart of the new system that we are in. TAFE is now no longer part of the department and they are a provider who are having to exist commercially. The whole point about what we are doing with the money that we are putting in to training—and it is the same amount as last year, \$615 million—is that we, the government, set the subsidies. It is TAFE that set the fees. In the first we acknowledge that high fees or increasing fees are prospectively going to be a barrier to students wanting to study a course, but it depends on whether the course is going to lead to a job. That is why I am going to ask the CEO to address this issue about fees. But to give us some perspective, TAFE wants to get business because it is a commercial entity, but it obviously will make sure that it gets courses and people enrolling in courses in that we as the government are going to give a higher subsidy to courses that are going to lead to real jobs according to what industry has told the Ministerial Industry Commission. TAFE no longer talk to us about what the fees are going to be. They set their fees and we set the subsidies, but we are doing it based on the information that says that these courses will lead to a job. I will ask the CEO to respond to some of those aspects, notwithstanding that some of the representations about TAFE fees have come without the acknowledgement of the fact that people might have a prior qualification or they might be doing another certificate, whereas we have made significant promises, as the assistant minister has just

pointed out, about a certificate III guarantee for a year 12 school leaver and many other things that we are doing as well. I will ask the CEO to address some of these issues, because I acknowledge that that is significant unless you are prepared to acknowledge that TAFE is now a competitor with a number of other organisations and they actually want to get business.

Ms Schmidt: One of the misconceptions around TAFE fees is that in the past there has been a regulated fee for the payment by students and then an associated fee for service offering and in fact government subsidised places. When you make a comparison between the previous fee offering and a fee offering under the new policy arrangements, it is a very complex scenario. We have done our level best to try to ensure that our calculation of fees has not changed between the two policy positions. What that means is that, as the minister has acknowledged, where subsidies are being directed towards programs that deliver employment outcomes there is a change in the percentage makeup of government subsidy as opposed to student contribution, or in fact in some instances we have had for a long time quite successful full-fee-for-service markets in many programs. Sometimes, depending on the qualification, you will see either an increase in student contribution required; in other instances a decrease in student contribution required to study certain courses; and then some have remained the same, which is the bulk of our offering. It is important not to compare a government subsidised price with a full-fee-for-service price because you will see a differential. There is always a CPI increase year on year in terms of prices.

Our policy inside TAFE Queensland is to maintain our student contribution around what has been traditionally calculated at about \$1.60 per student contact hour, which has been traditionally the regulated fee set. Unless we are making an offering at a full-fee-for-service basis, we are making the best offering to all students and invite students to engage with our organisation to help them to understand the best decisions for them to make in order to select the discipline in which they study and therefore the implications for their arrangements. Similarly, we have expanded our offering in terms of being able to access income contingent loans through VET fee help and in fact payment plans for those students. So there is a closer relationship between what a student contributes to a course and the return on that course in many respects.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Schmidt.

Ms D'ATH: Director-General, can you advise me whether you have a dedicated workplace relations or workforce unit within the Department of Education, Training and Employment where the TAFE would have access to that up until 1 July of this year and how many staff were employed in that unit?

Mr O'Hagan: Yes, we do have a workforce industrial relations unit and I have met with some of those members and been briefed on a number of matters regarding EBs. But as to the actual size and numbers, I can get that for you in a few moments.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you.

Mr LANGBROEK: We are happy to take that on notice.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, over the past two years we have seen quite a reduction in staff numbers, including teacher numbers, in TAFE. We have certainly seen some course reductions. The TAFE educational employees certified agreement expired in June last year and no wage increase has been given to the educational staff since that time. Can you answer for me and the committee how much money has been expended on the arbitration of the TAFE educational employee certified agreement that commenced in July 2013, has now had eight occasions of legal representation of counsel, Queen's Counsel, a large law firm in Brisbane, including instructing a partner and associate, and all up when this matter comes back before the Industrial Commission in July this year there will be 10 occasions where outsourcing of legal representation, counsel and Queen's Counsel—

Mr PUCCI: Point of order, Madam Chair. I do not see how this question could be considered brief and related to the one issue of the estimates.

Ms D'ATH: It is very relevant. It goes to expenditure of arbitration of the certified agreement for the staff—

CHAIR: Just one moment. Member for Redcliffe, I would ask that you can confirm that this question does not contravene the rules relating to matters sub judice. You seem to be speaking about a lot of court cases—

Ms D'ATH: My question goes specifically to the cost of legal representation that has been expended in the 2013-14 year to arbitrate this matter.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to answer the question. I am going to say very succinctly what I have already said: two of the issues that made it difficult for TAFE as it was in its former form—that is, not as a commercial entity—to be competitive were its infrastructure and its industrial relations. To put it very bluntly, the future success of TAFE Queensland as the public provider of vocational education and training is dependent on the resolution of the current industrial arrangements. That is why the government has had to put in \$134 million as part of the VET Investment Plan to help TAFE to keep going under its current industrial relations arrangements.

This has been a significant matter that has gone to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. Yes, there have been conciliation conferences. Then the QTU sought the referral of the matter to arbitration. To put it in a very succinct way, I am not going to provide all the details of what the government is doing, because I would implore the unions to say, 'We need to come to a proper resolution of an outdated industrial relations instrument to enable TAFE to be competitive in a competitive market.' Remember, this is a reform that is a national reform that has been endorsed by every other state in Australia under a national partnership, signed off by the former federal Labor government saying that training needed to be changed, otherwise there was a danger in TAFE as it was going in terms of lack of people being in institutes and lack of outcomes. We want to make sure that we maximise what we get for our training dollar. That is why we have been saying that we want to work with the unions, but they have to get into the 21st century.

Ms D'ATH: So will the minister provide the figures of the legal costs?

Mr LANGBROEK: No, I am not going to provide those materials.

Ms D'ATH: So you are not going to be transparent about how much has been spent on legal costs to arbitrate this matter?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am saying very clearly that we want the unions to come to the table and sit down and accept that, for the sake of their own members for whom they proclaim they represent, the way it was going was not going to end up very well for an organisation that had low utilisation and that had an outdated industrial relations instrument. Seeking to prolong it is only prolonging the agony for their own members in the current process.

Ms D'ATH: Could I ask Ms Schmidt: now that TAFE Queensland is an independent body, will TAFE Queensland have to take on these legal costs in relation to these ongoing matters?

Ms Schmidt: Thank you for the question. I expect that we will. We have budgeted accordingly ahead of what we anticipate will be legal costs to support us in representing ourselves as the employer with the commission and in negotiating with unions in 2014-16.

Ms D'ATH: Can you advise how much you have budgeted for these proceedings?

Ms Schmidt: We estimate that this is probably \$250,000 worth of estimated effort. It is not a firm figure; it is a figure that we expect we will use as a retainer basis for advice in that regard.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. Minister, can I take you to page 5 of the SDS in relation to your priority areas for TAFE. Can I give you a couple of specific examples. I am not talking general statements. A certificate I in engineering metal fabrication, in semester 2, 2012, was \$788.49. In semester 1, 2014, it became \$1,456—an increase of 84 per cent. In semester 2 in 2014, this course is now \$4,438 for a certificate I in engineering metal fabrication. In a certificate III in electrotechnology, between 2012 and 2014 the course has gone, as a concession amount, from \$425.05 to \$1,261. Minister, do you believe that an increase of 205 per cent is a hefty increase?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am going to refer the matter of the particular courses and the costs that you mentioned to the CEO of TAFE, because we set the subsidies; they set the fees. What I would be suggesting is that for any people doing those courses, the reason that certificate I as quoted as you mentioned, would either be because employers are saying, 'Anyone who graduates with that, or anyone we have seen with it really does not have the skills to do what we need to do,' in which case they would not be recommending that people do it. Therefore, there is less of a subsidy, because the market is saying, 'If you want to do this it is going to cost you more, because we do not think that there is necessarily going to be a job at the end of it,' whereas if you do a course that the government has identified through communicating with industry that they are going to actually get a course and they are a year 12 with a certificate III guarantee—they do not even have to do a certificate I; they can do a certificate III for which they will get a more significant subsidy and have a lower fee at TAFE. I will let the CEO comment about those specific examples, because I could not take down the specific examples that you were talking about.

Ms Schmidt: I got the first one down but not the second.

Ms D'ATH: I am happy to repeat them if you need me to.

Ms Schmidt: Certificate I in engineering metal fabrication, semester 2, presumably, 2013?

Ms D'ATH: No, 2014. So the final figure, semester 2, 2014, is \$4,438; semester 1, 2014, \$1,456 and semester 2, 2012, \$788,49. I am happy to hand up documents to confirm that.

Mr LATTER: Point of order.

CHAIR: I have a point of order.

Mr LATTER: Madam Speaker, notwithstanding the extensive preamble in this question, the question is calling for a matter of opinion. I ask that the question be ruled out of order

Mr HOPPER: No, it is not. It is an absolute.

CHAIR: Are you asking for an opinion or are you asking for factual figures?

Ms D'ATH: It is a factual question—whether the minister thinks that it is a significant increase—

CHAIR: Not whether he thinks.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am not going to comment about whether I believe an increase of this—I did not even address that part of the question. I am happy for the CEO to answer the aspects about the certificate I and actual fees, because it does not get away from the fact that we want people to do courses that will lead to jobs. It is fairly obvious. We set the subsidies, from which we did not resile, and TAFE sets the fees. I would have thought that if TAFE thought that they could get lots of people doing a certificate I who were going to get a job out of it and, therefore, the students would be really happy to do the certificate I because they would get a job, they would lower the fee from whatever was quoted to a much lower fee so that they would get more students doing it. The reason they are not is that that particular course does not lead to a real job. But I will ask the CEO to expand.

CHAIR: Member for Redcliffe, I think there is a fairly fair explanation in answer to your question there, but over to the minister.

Ms Schmidt: Our fee setting, as I said before, is based on the government subsidy and what the cost for us to deliver to market is. Those fees, I expect, may be—and it is hard for me to tell without taking the question away—talking about different fund sources at different times. It would be very difficult to explain specific programs here.

TAFE Queensland delivers over 800 programs from 52 campuses and those programs vary in terms of their delivery at those campuses. So if you multiply \$800 by 52 it would be difficult to be able to attest to any particular program and what the change in those fees are. In fact, if those prices are not consistent per campus, then they are not comparable, either.

In terms of fee prices, this is a demand-driven system whereby government subsidies are being applied in the areas where there is advice from industry that there will be job outcomes. In that regard, you will see that the ability and the affordability of those programs that lead to employment outcomes are within range and we will continue to watch them.

As a commercial organisation, we need to ensure that we are influencing demand. We delivered to 168,000 students in 2013-14 and we expect similar numbers as the training sector grows as a result of this policy agenda. So we are looking forward to servicing similar, or growing numbers of students as we need to in order to contribute to the economy of this state.

Mr LANGBROEK: For the member for Redcliffe, I really want to provide as much information as I can now from the department perspective about why the subsidy may change. That was a question about fees, for which I have said that the government is responsible for the subsidy. So I am going to invite the assistant director-general to come to give an answer that will hopefully give some more explanation as to the matter.

Mr Favell: The subsidy-setting process has changed, but essentially we use the priorities identified in the Ministerial Industry Commission's skills priority report and other national reports that have identified priority occupations and qualifications for Queensland. We then work out what the indicative course value is for a particular course based on the effort taken to undertake that training and additional costs that an RTO would incur. Based on the priority level assigned to that occupation through those reports, that determines the level of government subsidy. In a market situation, RTOs are able to charge the fees provided they disclose them upfront to students. Those fees, as the minister mentioned before, are deregulated.

We do know that for the 17 qualifications that have been contestable through the last year that the average student fees per qualification is \$254. So that is across all of those qualifications that have been fully contestable. The challenge will be how providers respond to the needs of students.

As Jodi mentioned before, from a TAFE point of view there will be some fees that have gone down, some that have remained the same and some that will go up based on that level of subsidy and the potential demand for students to undertake that qualification.

Ms D'ATH: Can I just clarify? I believe Ms Schmidt said before that there are 800 courses on offer. As I understand it, there are 300 courses subsidised; is that correct? So there would be 500 that do not attract a subsidy?

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, that is approximately correct.

Mr Favell: There is roughly, I think, about 1,500 qualifications and training packages. The state has traditionally, through TAFE and other sources, funded—767 comes to mind—and under the new VET Investment Plan we are funding 567 qualifications all up across User Choice, the Certificate III Guarantee and the Higher Level Skills program.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. Minister, based on the priorities of the government, did the government refer to any training or employment data prior to or since on deciding on the four pillars that it is concentrating on for training?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. I want to reassure the honourable member that, whilst the four pillars are the things that we speak about a lot—whether it is construction or agriculture, or mining resources or tourism—there are also many other courses. You only have to have a look at the list to see how many are still being funded across-the-board in those 567, or over 500, qualifications that we are talking about. So I think it is also a mistake to try to suggest that we are focusing so much on the four pillars. There are other options that people may want to do that we are still offering.

But I have said this quite openly and quite publicly: if people have a qualification already—it may be a degree, it might be another diploma or certificate—and they want to do aromatherapy, or reflexology, or fitness training, depending on where the area is, and there may be a great demand for some or all of those courses in particular areas, is it appropriate, when we are spending \$615 million in subsidies to subsidise programs, that we subsidise a program like aromatherapy or reflexology when people may have no qualification at all? That has been the unabashed aim of the government to say, 'It is taxpayers' money—it is yours and my money—subsidising programs.' We want students to get a proper qualification, not just in the four pillars—and that is why there are lots of others options: people can do graphic design, they can do arts programs, and there are a number of them; a great list of qualifications that still attract subsidy but depending on the area—and that is why we have the regional focus of the Ministerial Industry Commission forums. In Cairns, there may be different demands because of the tourism market. In Central Queensland there may be different demands as well. It is not just the four pillars on which we are focusing our training dollar being expended.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We will now move to government questions. I refer to page 8 of the SDS and the Ministerial Industry Commission. With respect to the development of the 2014-15 VET Investment Plan, can the minister advise if there will be room for change in the plan in 2015-16 if the commission's intelligence indicates that that is required?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the chair for that question, because it is a very good question. To make sure that this is a flexible enough system to get information back, whether it is at those regional forums, so that if there is something that has been missed out, or some industry that pops up quickly for which we need to have a responsive training market, we would want to make sure that the department, as advised by the Ministerial Industry Commission, takes notice of that and then comes to us at one of those forums, or even in between to local members to make sure that gets passed on. I will let the assistant minister expand a little, because it is something that is a contrast to what might have happened in the past. The classic example is the coal seam gas industry, where for a long time there were people telling me as the minister a couple of years ago that courses for Dial Before You Dig, or for the number of people who were going to be drilling wells, there were not enough courses being prepared to provide Queenslanders with jobs that would be out there. At the time I was dealing with Skills Queensland, meeting people at functions. Our job is to make sure that we are providing those courses with the appropriate subsidies so that people are not frustrated with the lack of opportunities to get a job. That is where, again, the assistant minister, who chairs the Ministerial Industry Commission, can give the committee some more advice about how flexible, or how responsive the MIC will be and the department as well.

Mrs RICE: Thank you, Minister. To inform the committee, the minister was very clear in his direction for the Ministerial Industry Commission that he is looking for that responsive advice, the dynamic advice on an annual basis. As I explained a little earlier, the first *Annual skills priority report* was delivered to the minister earlier this year—at the end of March.

The Ministerial Industry Commission partnered with Deloitte Access Economics to develop a lot of the information contained within that report and consulted widely with industry to also ensure that there is a qualitative overlay to the data. The data comes from information provided through industry skills bodies but particularly ABS data and a range of other data to form the whole of the report. The purpose was to ensure there was nothing that was a surprise within that report in the sense that the report was put out in draft form so that all of industry could also take a look at the report in draft form and ensure that it did contain the most accurate and up-to-date advice to the minister prior to its finalisation.

As I was describing earlier, the process is ongoing. We have had a number of regional forums since the production of that first report. We are working towards the production of our annual skills highlight report, and that is another avenue to provide further information to the minister. We expect that as the process completes for this year we are looking to update that *Annual skills priority report* next year so that again we can make sure it is the most accurate information going to the minister ahead of his finalisation of what will then be the 2015-16 VET investment framework.

It is certainly the intention that it is an ongoing, dynamic process that ensures the minister is provided with the most accurate and up-to-date information from industry around where the skills priorities are for the state. The minister talked about coal seam gas as an example. With things like the NDIS, there is going to be a great skills need in that area of health and community services. From that point of view, I would support the comments the minister was making that there are a number of industries that underpin the four pillars, and that is reflected in the *Annual skills priority report* where we have focused particular chapters on areas like transport and logistics, manufacturing, health and community services and retail. Certainly the feedback from industry at this stage is that the advice provided by industry through the *Annual skills priority report* has been reflected in the minister's VET investment framework and the qualifications that are now being purchased by government.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mrs Rice.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, in respect to page 6 of the SDS, can you please advise whether the government is on track to reach its 10,000 new apprentices over six years? What measures have been put in place to ensure that these goals are achieved?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. As he has mentioned, this is a significant promise that we made at the last election to create 10,000 additional apprenticeships over the next six years. Through the bill that we brought into the parliament and passed this year, the first thing we wanted to do was get rid of some of those red-tape issues when people wanted to change apprenticeships. Some of that was very unwieldy, especially for young people who may start something and then discover that they do not want to keep doing it. That is quite prevalent among young people now. Instead of doing what used to happen with an apprenticeship: people would stick it out for four years. So we have made significant changes to the red-tape provisions. I will ask the assistant director-general to elaborate a little more on some of those changes.

I ask the committee to note that our apprentice data lags a little bit because of the length of time from when an apprentice gets signed up to when it goes through the paperwork, but I can advise the committee that for this year we are ahead of schedule from the agreed amount of apprenticeships that we would have to get over and above the regular starting point, which is about 16,000. I can give the committee the actual number. So we need to create about 1,600 extra apprenticeships over the next six years and each of those years combined to get to an extra 10,000.

What we are doing at the moment is investing up to \$13 million over three years in the school to trade pathway, which is going to provide employers about a \$5,000 incentive for someone who goes from a school based apprenticeship straight into continuing their apprenticeship, and also a group training organisation additional apprenticeship bonus initiative to support this commitment to create 10,000 additional apprentices. I will ask the assistant director-general to report on some of those red-tape changes we had in that bill recently.

Mr Favell: Some of the changes the minister refers to relate to matters that this committee considered through the process, the big one being the introduction, or reintroduction in some respects, of the ability to transfer an apprenticeship rather than to cancel an apprenticeship. That act came into force on 1 July and I can report today that there have already been two instances of apprentices we have transferred to new employers, avoiding the need to cancel that apprentice and then try to recommence it. They have been able to transfer. We have better provisions for suspension of the training contract where all the parties agree. As far as the lag goes from apprenticeship data,

we have reduced the time for reporting the commencement of apprenticeship from four months to 28 days so we will get more accurate reporting on commencement of apprenticeships and help young people know right upfront that they are actually an apprentice.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Geoff. I point out to the committee that, of the \$615 million that we are spending in training, \$225 million is for user choice. That is the component for apprenticeships and traineeships. Most importantly, for the committee's benefit, it is not the government that will get 10,000 apprentices. It will be the private sector through increased confidence in the economy, especially in construction. That sector has been struggling over the last number of years, probably since the global financial crisis. We have all heard about the prospective green shoots. Under the previous government I remember Rob Swarten, the then minister for public works and housing, would always be touting there was a number of apprentices employed, especially in QBuild. That was all very admirable, and it was some hundreds and it was a very good thing, but it is also important to understand if we are trying to get an increase of 10,000 apprentices over six years the bulk of those are not going to come from the government employing those apprentices. It will be from the private sector feeling enough confidence to be able to put those apprentices on. I can report that through the initiatives we have undertaken so including far red-tape reduction, making it easier for people to change and also other incentives like the school to trade pathway and the group training organisation bonus that we are absolutely committed to achieving these 10,000 extra apprentices over the next few years.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Minister, with respect to page 5 of the SDS, how many grade 12 students in 2015 will be able to take up fee-free apprenticeships and traineeships in high priority skill areas on finishing their studies?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I will refer this to the Assistant Minister for Technical and Further Education.

Mrs RICE: Thank you very much for the question. It is part of the minister's desire ultimately to see opportunities for Queenslanders from crayon to career, as he often says, and it is another key component of the Great skills. Real opportunities five-year action plan. Fee-free training gives all eligible year 12 graduates a head start on their careers by allowing them to complete a high priority qualification through an apprenticeship, traineeship or selected vocational education and training course. It will do so in the calendar year following completion of year 12, and this has been the case from January 2014.

With the demand driven market framework established through the implementation of Great skills. Real opportunities, all eligible students will be able to undertake fee-free training of their choice with a provider of their choice. While the department will be monitoring the activity within the fee-free year 12 initiative along with all programs within the VET Investment Plan, there is no intention of limiting the number of places available for eligible year 12 students to access fee-free training. Over 48,000 eligible year 12 students who completed in 2013 currently have access to fee-free training. Of the current 2014 cohort completing year 12, around 50,000 students may be eligible for fee-free training from January 2015.

The fee-free training initiative is available through two existing programs—the Certificate III Guarantee and the User Choice Program, which funds apprenticeships and traineeships training. Under the Certificate III Guarantee, prequalified suppliers will be paid 100 per cent of the indicative course value identified by the department and will not charge the student a co-contribution towards their training. Similarly, with the User Choice Program, the department will continue to provide the relevant core subsidy to the prequalified supplier and will directly reimburse the prequalified supplier the applicable fee amount for all eligible students. Based on an assessment of historical delivery data, the estimated cost for the fee-free training strategy for all eligible students is approximately \$5.5 million—\$1.5 million under user choice and \$4 million under the Certificate III Guarantee. This is about ensuring there is a seamless transition for students into VET if that is their chosen field following the completion of year 12.

Mr DOWLING: Minister, with respect to page 6 of the Service Delivery Statement, can you please outline how the merger of the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE with Central Queensland University will deliver on both the needs of regional industry and students by creating a one-stop shop for VET and tertiary qualifications?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is something that has received significant publicity over the last couple of weeks, especially in Central Queensland. This is something this government said it would resolve over the course of the government. When we came

to government this is something that had been promoted through the regions from Rockhampton, where Central Queensland University is based, and Central Queensland TAFE where there are 12 or 13 different places where it was being delivered—Biloela, Emerald, as far down as Gladstone and up to Mackay as well. Last week Christopher Pyne, the federal education minister, and I announced the launch. It was an agreement entered into on 11 September 2013, once the government had been able to work out the various issues. We had the federal government providing some significant money from the education investment fund for Central Queensland University to improve some of their facilities, and the state put in a significant amount of money—over \$100 million when you look at infrastructure—and then some training money that we have guaranteed for a certain amount of time.

It is the first time a TAFE and university have been merged in Queensland. It delivers, as I have mentioned, on the government's election commitment to resolve the merger. It establishes a dual sector university—Queensland's first one—offering both VET and higher education programs in the Central Queensland region. The legislation enabling the creation of dual sector entities in Queensland was passed on 8 May 2014, and on 1 July the TAFE Queensland amendment regulation 2014 came into effect, merging CQIT and CQ University and establishing CQ University as a dual sector university.

The merger is expected to provide greater business opportunities for the new entity and offer new efficiencies in its operations, thereby increasing productivity and also providing a range of benefits to students in the region. As was mentioned to us when we had the cabinet in Proserpine in the early stages of the government, the mayor of Mackay said they really wanted us to do this as did the mayor of Rockhampton, the local communities and the local member in Gladstone. We had to provide certainty to make sure this was a merger and not a takeover, because that was the reassurance that I needed to be able to give to people who were employed in the TAFE system. That is something I did with the now CEO of TAFE Queensland but who at the time was working in the department. We went to speak to the TAFE workers to say this is going to be something we believe is a positive for the region, balancing the technical needs that vocational education and training provides with the theoretical aspects of a university. The local university was very keen to do this. It wants to enhance the educational offering for students in that area.

As we have seen from other places in Victoria and the Northern Territory which are dual sectors—Swinburne, RMIT and I think Charles Darwin are dual sectors—if you are a first in family who may never have believed you could go to university, by going to TAFE and getting that first certificate or at least learning in a place where you get a qualification, you will get smoother pathways between TAFE or between vocational education and training and university courses giving students greater flexibility, more credit for prior learning and faster course completion times.

As I mentioned, there is an emphasis on the practical application of skills and the job readiness of TAFE. In an area like Central Queensland where they have a high mining and high engineering demand in their workforce, that combines with the theoretical knowledge and links to research from higher education, making graduates more job ready and employable. We satisfy the needs of industry. As I say, wherever we were in Central Queensland—from Emerald, Biloela through to Mackay, Gladstone, Rockhampton and all the places in between—industry was saying it wants a one-stop shop for a range of VET and higher education qualifications. It gives the CQU and CQIT staff greater options to expand their professional skills and experience. I know they are very enthusiastic about that.

There is also the development of a range of projects. There was a major refurbishment of the CQIT Mackay campus, a new state-of-the-art engineering hub that we opened a few months ago, so we have gifted that to CQU, but with protections for the state at Ooralea. Compared to the downtown TAFE campus in Mackay, it is just an eye-opening revelation at the university site to see the enthusiasm of the students and the teachers and trainers who are involved there. Plus, there is also the development of stage 2 of the public access CQU health clinic in Rockhampton.

I want to mention the specific contribution. I said it was over \$100 million from the Queensland government: \$116 million in assets, \$40 million in revenue for the first 18 months and I also want to acknowledge the Australian government's \$73.8 million over four years from the structural adjustment and EIF, the Education Investment Fund, to support the merger. I am looking forward to that being a great success. I know that has been received with a lot of enthusiasm throughout the regions. We look forward to monitoring its success, both financially and, of course, to the economy locally in Central Queensland.

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

Mr LANGBROEK: Sorry, member for Redcliffe, but I just want to come back to you with a quick answer to the question on notice that we took about the Workforce Relations unit. There is one director and 18.2 staff, so a total of 19.2 FTEs.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. Minister, I wish to take you to the funding for the Community Learning program. I know that you and your department have referred to this program as, I guess, in some ways filling a gap where some of those foundation skills might not be offered or affordable by TAFE into the future. I want you to reaffirm your understanding of the Community Learning program, that it is targeted for those people who are disadvantaged learners: disengaged youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disabilities, migrants, low skilled workers with no post qualifications. That is the targeted group you are looking at for Community Learning; is that correct, minister?

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, that is right.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, would not you expect many of those people who fall into those categories to be on some form of income support or employment services or assistance from the Australian government?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am not going to comment so much about the Australian government; I am happy to speak about the Community Learning initiative from the state where I have seen—and I think it has already been mentioned this afternoon—up to 4,000 learners who are getting this training. I have seen it in terms of a partnership with Boys Town, which is providing some of those courses. I saw it at Redlands. I think the member for Redlands was at Cleveland when I made an announcement there at Boys Town and recently I was at Woodridge State High School seeing some of those learners who were not at school anymore and they were people who needed qualifications to be able to get jobs in healthcare or retail. That is where we are trying to make sure we provide, in a supportive community-based environment, a responsive funding model through Community Learning that is not just going to be provided at TAFE, which I have mentioned can provide some of these courses. We are also getting other organisations like Boys Town to provide a partnership with the government to make sure we can provide those courses to people who deserve to have a job. As I mentioned, there are 49 projects state-wide that have been approved in 2013-14, worth \$12.2 million and providing supported training places to 3,937 disadvantaged learners. They are being delivered across areas of local industry demand, including community services, construction, mining, primary industries, transport and distribution, hospitality, retail and business.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, I refer to Australian government employment services and assistance, because your own policy actually excludes people who are on income support and/or accessing Australian government employment services or assistance. Would not that mean you would be excluding a large proportion of people who are disadvantaged, who are supposed to be your target group?

Mr LANGBROEK: I think the point of it is that it helps those who are ineligible for Australian government employment assistance. In other words, we want to ensure if they were ineligible for Australian government employment assistance through the job network or those federal programs, that we can provide support instead of not so much a duplication but potentially a doubling up, trying to make our resources go as far as they can to help as many people as possible. If people are ineligible for Australian government employment assistance and are unable to easily take advantage of the Certificate III Guarantee, as we have already explained it this afternoon which is going to be for year 12 especially once they finish school, we want to provide help if they have been ineligible for the Australian government assistance.

Ms D'ATH: So when we talk about people with a disability, we are only talking about people with a disability who would not be eligible for a disability pension?

Mr LANGBROEK: I cannot comment about the specifics of what the member is referring to there, but I can say that the Australian government runs a number of Foundation Skills programs, including the Adult Migrant Education Program and the Skills for Education and Employment program. We have to have learners directed to the appropriate program. The important thing is we are trying to get our state money going to programs that will help as many people as possible and make sure that, just like in vocational education and training, there is a focus at the state level from certificate III where certificate IV and diplomas can now be funded through VET fee help.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, I am also very interested in helping those most in need in our community. My question goes to people at Redcliffe TAFE who have a disability who are on support pension and can no longer afford to do the literacy and numeracy course, because it is going from \$140 and \$160 to \$800, but would be excluded from accessing Community Learning under your own policy document because they are on a disability pension. What support do those people have?

Mr LANGBROEK: Whilst we are talking about the specifics of TAFE, and I will ask the CEO of TAFE Queensland to come and speak to you about that particular case, but that is not something that I can address specifically in terms of the SDS. I will ask the CEO of TAFE Queensland—

Ms D'ATH: Minister, would you have concerns if people are unable to access TAFE because of the affordability and they are excluded from your own Community Learning program?

Mr LANGBROEK: I want to make sure that we are giving subsidies as well for programs and we currently still are in TAFE. There are a number of 15 Foundation Skills programs, as I understand it, that are still being funded and provided. I will ask the CEO of TAFE Queensland to give you an answer specifically about Redcliffe.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. I should say that this is not specific to Redcliffe, because I have heard a number of examples of these courses going up or actually ceasing with TAFE, which means Community Learning might be their only other option.

Ms Schmidt: Could you repeat the question for me in terms of the detail?

Ms D'ATH: What I am trying to identify is this: the Community Learning program says that it is targeting disengaged people, including people with a disability, yet it excludes people who are receiving income support, so someone on a disability pension would be excluded from accessing the Community Learning, but under TAFE's courses they are also having to pay the fee increases, which is precluding them from accessing those types of courses because of the fee structure.

Ms Schmidt: So there has been a change, as you point out, to government subsidy in some programs. Traditionally, we have delivered to these cohorts programs like certificate I in core skills or a variety of different language, literacy and numeracy programs. Where we are working with those students now is around seeing the applicability of that cohort of individuals to the programs that the minister has mentioned in terms of funding for Foundation Skills, because a Certificate III Guarantee provides funding for individuals to complete Foundation Skills training from an approved list to support them to a certificate III outcome. Where that is not possible for certain individuals and that is the case, we continue to work to try to ensure that we can meet their needs in terms of their learning needs and we are working to look for alternative fund sources where perhaps we are talking about individuals who are not working towards an employment outcome into the future. We are working with the Department of Community Services and other organisations like the Endeavour Foundation to see if we can continue to deliver, but from a TAFE Queensland perspective we need to ensure that we can make ends meet in terms of delivering to the cohorts of students.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I expand, too, a little on my answer. I want to give, for the committee's benefit, a breakdown of the group of disadvantaged learners, what they are made up of: 57 per cent women, 21 per cent mature-age people over 45 years, five per cent people with a disability, 42 per cent young people aged 15 to 24 years, 25 per cent migrants and eight per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. I say to the committee, of course these are the things that we hope that through the National Disability Insurance Scheme, we continue our department working with that minister to make sure that what happens there is hopefully going to—and I know there is a lot of expectation in the community about the assistance that is going to be given to people who fit into that cohort. We will continue to work with them to look for more opportunities for those students.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, before I get accused of putting a hypothetical to you, can I just refer to your hypothetical before in which you said you make no apologies for the fact that the government is not going to fund people who have already done a cert III or higher and now want to go off and do a certificate III in aromatherapy, I think was your example.

Mr LANGBROEK: No, we will not fund them to the amount that we may have in the past or that the training system may have funded them in the past, necessarily.

Ms D'ATH: As I understand it, if a person has done a certificate III or higher in the past, though, they are precluded from any form of subsidy? They would be paying full fee; is that correct?

Mr LANGBROEK: No, I cannot give you that detail necessarily.

Ms D'ATH: VET might be able to answer that?

Mr LANGBROEK: No, I will ask the deputy director-general, Geoff Favell, please.

Mr Favell: On the way up, I have forgotten the question, sorry.

Mr LANGBROEK: About whether anyone who has a certificate III or higher is precluded from getting a subsidy for any subsequent course.

Mr Favell: They are for a certificate III. There is provision at the moment, though, if they wanted to go into an apprenticeship, to enter into one of the trade areas. They could get a second chance at funding for a certificate III if it is related to an apprenticeship. Obviously, the higher level skills strategy provides opportunities for people to progress beyond the cert III into certificate IV level qualifications as well.

Ms D'ATH: So if someone sought to do a cert IV diploma who has previously done a certificate III, they would be eligible for subsidies?

Mr Favell: Yes.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, can I just ask you in relation to the tuition fee subsidies, in the budget papers it is the concession statement, I should say, at page 13. It talks about the VET tuition fee subsidy and that the structure has changed and there is now the Certificate III Guarantee tuition fee subsidy and the higher level skills tuition fee subsidy. Minister, can you just clarify, are there any other tuition fee subsidies available to VET students or are those now the two streams that replace what was the VET tuition fee subsidy?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am sorry, member for Redcliffe: I am looking for where it is. You say page 13 of the SDS?

Ms D'ATH: The concession statement.

Mr LANGBROEK: From the budget papers. I do not have that with me here.

CHAIR: It is the SDS that we are using as a reference.

Mr LANGBROEK: But it is a budget paper, Madam Chair, and I am prepared to accept that as a question. Geoff, can you answer that?

Mr Favell: The two predominant sources of funding or access to subsidies for individuals would be the cert III guarantee and the higher level skills strategy. But within that there are areas to address areas or potential areas of market failure where people will access training places under the Industry Partnerships Strategy and the Indigenous Training Strategy, with the first rounds of those strategies to be rolled out shortly.

Ms D'ATH: The VET tuition fee subsidy was \$342.3 million in 2013-14, the Certificate III Guarantee tuition fee is \$108 million for 2014-15 and the higher skills tuition fee is \$55 million. Can you explain where the remainder of the funding that was previously the VET tuition fee subsidy now sits?

Mr Favell: The \$342 million was predominantly VET revenue general that was provided to TAFE only. As outlined in the VET investment plan for this year, there are a range of funding streams, including the subsidy to the public provider that the minister has outlined before.

Ms D'ATH: On that basis, Minister, are you able to provide a breakdown of the Certificate III Guarantee tuition fee subsidy and the higher level skills tuition fee subsidy for 2013-14 and 2014-15, between private provider and public provider; the breakdown of the funding?

Mr LANGBROEK: One thing I am certainly happy to provide is the breakdown of the \$615 million that we have mentioned this afternoon: 225 for user choice, 134 for TAFE, extra money for the agricultural colleges, money for the merger. But I am just having a look here—

Ms D'ATH: So this is specifically the tuition fee subsidies—the breakdown between public and private?

Mr LANGBROEK: The answer I have here is that a total of \$567 million in training concessions was reported in the 2013-14 concession statement compared to \$381 million in the 2014-15 concession, to which the honourable member just referred. The key difference relates to the noninclusion of the TAFE owners grant of \$154 million which is not considered a concession available to the public. Hopefully that clarifies that.

Ms D'ATH: That certainly clarifies that component, Minister. Are you able to give me a breakdown of the \$100.3 million for 2013-14 and the \$100.8 million for 2014-15 for the certificate III tuition fee subsidy and the same in relation to the higher level skills tuition fee subsidy between public and private?

Mr LANGBROEK: What I am prepared to do is take on notice that we will give you some more information about the specifics of your question. I find it a little difficult to understand exactly what it is you are asking. But we will provide more information that hopefully will address some of your questions. Geoff, do you have any more to say there? I am trying to give as much information as possible.

Ms D'ATH: I will clarify. In relation to the two subsidies over the two financial years, how much goes to public and how much goes to private?

Mr Favell: That data is available and it can be provided. I guess the issue would be, just to reinforce what the minister said, that we are probably not comparing apples with apples because the TAFE owners grant is a component of it. We would make a note about that. The actual expenditure can be provided.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, in relation to school based apprenticeships and traineeships, can you advise with the change to the TAFE fee structure and the subsidies are schools still able to access and is TAFE still delivery certificate I and certificate II courses to schools as part of that program?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. This has been very important for our state where we have more school based apprenticeships and trainees than any other state. We often see that reflected in terms of our success at the national training awards.

There is a review at the national level and a review at the state level about the efficacy of the programs. Again, this is based upon what employers tell us about how they have received students. We want to make sure that students are not just being directed to some of these courses because they are not in the academic stream. That is not the reason that we should be encouraging students to go down the vocational education and training pathway. The second aspect is that we want to make sure that we are getting the best outcomes for our employers and for the students themselves who will be very disappointed if they get out and then employers say, 'You can't actually do the things that I believe you thought you could do.'

I know that TAFE is absolutely committed—because it has a great advantage here in terms of the contestable market—to providing these services in an ongoing way. I will ask the CEO to expand a little on my statement, but I want to give you some more advice that I have here.

There will be a change to VET in schools for training activity. They are positive changes focused on a transition pathway from school to work. We will only fund qualifications identified by industry as leading to employment. It is important to note the majority of VET in schools activity is delivered and resourced by school registered training organisations. In 2012 approximately three out of four VET in school enrolments were resourced by schools, with the remainder funded by the VET investment budget and delivered by TAFE institutes.

Changes to VET in schools funded by the VET investment budget will not impact on VET in schools activity which is resourced and delivered in schools or privately through fee-for-service arrangements. From 1 July funding will be provided from the VET investment budget for students to complete one employment stream qualification at the certificate I and II levels. Students who wish to undertake a certificate III level qualification at school, funded by the VET investment budget, should do so as a school based apprentice or trainee. The overall certificate III budget, as per the 2014-15 VET investment plan, is \$155 million. Of this amount, \$30 million has been allocated for VET in schools delivery. However, as training activity will be demand driven, the budget allocation for VET in schools is indicative only.

I know that your question asked about TAFE so I would like the CEO, who has already mentioned to me that they believe that they have a competitive advantage in terms of other providers coming into schools—notwithstanding that three out of four course enrolments are resourced by schools—to comment. TAFE certainly provides this training and I am sure they want to keep providing it.

Ms Schmidt: We have a close working relationship with many schools, both independent and state schools, across the state and we continue to deliver certificate I and II programs, as the minister outlined, that are endorsed on the government subsidised list. Similarly, we continue to build relationships where we believe we can offer a combined arrangement with secondary schooling and vocational education and training to give secondary school students a better outcome towards an employment opportunity of their desire or assist them, in many instances, to complete vocationally oriented programs that help them to transition into other pathways to other education and the like.

Ms D'ATH: With the new fee structure from 1 July, will the fees also go up for the schools for students doing a certificate I or certificate II through TAFE Queensland?

Ms Schmidt: Subsidy levels change in line with the certificate III guarantee. There are certainly some details around the way in which that applies in schools. Schools have the ability to apply education funding to support the students. So the impact on the student is different in a school environment as a result of the policy position or the subsidy changes. We continue to deliver and have large demand for VET in schools, certainly at this point in time.

Ms D'ATH: I appreciate those fee increases may not flow to the student themselves, but will the school incur a larger cost as a consequence of the fee increases?

Ms Schmidt: The school has always incurred some cost, as has TAFE, and it depends on the model. I appreciate you are asking the question, but it is very complex, as all of these funding arrangements are. As the minister said, three quarters of the VET in school undertaking is funded by the education budget. Some 25 per cent is funded by the VET budget traditionally. The minister outlined what that has been set at for vocational education and training in 2014-15.

I expect that there is not a straight relationship between that funding amount and the amount of activity in VET in schools as individuals understand what the contribution to expanding students' learning in VET can be. So it is not a simple question to answer.

CHAIR: I think time has come to an end for this slot. I will now call the member for Logan.

Mr PUCCI: Minister, we have heard some talk about the contestability and sustainability of TAFE courses and the like. With respect to page 5 of the SDS, can you please outline what steps are in place to ensure that the quality will be protected through the rollout of the certificate III guarantee under a fully contestable arrangement?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. We are following a national program of changing the way training is delivered. We have given over our role as a regulator in the state to ASQA, which is the Australian Skills Quality Authority. I take members of the committee back to our discussions earlier this morning around early childhood where I said that our department had been, over the last few years, a regulator. That is what the Australian Skills Quality Authority has been focussing on over the last couple of years given that we gave over our right to be able to assess suppliers. They are the regulators.

The federal minister, Ian Macfarlane, has recently released either a report or a discussion paper into what he and the federal government and we as a state government would like to see. If we are freeing up the training market to people who want to be prequalified suppliers and there is more money available we need to make sure that if there is any element where quality is an issue that we have the ability to be able to refer those people on. If someone comes to our department and says, 'I went to see this training provider and I did not get trained to do anything but I know they'—the supplier—'received a significant amount of money for me to get my certificate which is now proving to be worthless' we need to make sure we have a regulator with teeth to deal with that.

That is something that the state is making sure we have. Through our departmental processes we want to make sure that our assessment of a prequalified supporter is strong and robust and we also have the ability to make sure that there are audits of these suppliers to make sure that quality is maintained.

As an example for the committee's benefit, there was unfettered release of money in Victoria a couple of years ago for people basically studying whatever they wanted and for providers to get subsidies for those programs. That led to a diminution of quality. There were some significant stories in the media nationally about people not getting proper qualifications. We want to be sure that in a much more mature way we are rolling this out carefully, allowing for the balance between quality and opening up the market to contestable funding.

We have made sure that we are going to work with ASQA. We are going to be working with the federal government to make sure the Australian Skills Quality Authority maintains teeth. They regulate the courses and training organisations to make sure that nationally approved quality standards are met. The department through the prequalified supplier policy is able to take action against a PQS, such as termination or suspension of funding for any event of default, including failure to meet their key performance indicators.

The department has a dedicated contract manager allocated for each PQS who is responsible for monitoring PQS performance under their agreement and associated policies. Regular reviews of PQS performance are undertaken to identify issues, including policy compliance, data quality and

performance against KPIs such as completion rates and employment outcomes achieved. The department undertakes random contractual audits of PQSs to further ascertain compliance with the relevant agreements and policies.

I have already mentioned that all PQS are also subject to audits of their training and their assessment practices conducted by ASQA. Similarly, the department will alert ASQA to any potential risk areas which are identified during departmental processes.

The PQS policy also requires the PQS to disclose information upfront to enable informed consumer choice, including total co-contribution fees charged for enrolment, the PQS's refund policy prior to enrolment to comply with VET quality framework requirements, the most audit results and rules regarding accessing a government subsidised training place under the relevant program, including information on extinguishing entitlement. It is also a mandatory requirement for PQS to refer prospective students to the department's student fact sheet. This ensures that students received independent advice about a program and have a point of contact with the department should they wish to report concerns regarding PQS behaviour.

I would implore all members of parliament to make sure, as I have in my electorate, that where they get any details about students querying the quality of the programs they receive to look at that. Most recently, I had the case of someone complaining to me as minister in written form about a warehousing program that was being delivered and there were question marks about it. I was able to ascertain from the department that they had immediately got on to this and were working with the supplier to make sure that there was not some way the supplier could provide the course in a much shortened form that was leading to a qualification that was not genuine.

We are making sure that we monitor what our prequalified suppliers are doing. In that case, we have set out five performance standards that a PQS must consistently demonstrate to maintain their status and how achievement against the standards will be measured by the department. The PQS has to maintain industry networks to deliver training that links to local job vacancies and support students to transition to the workforce, deliver quality training and assessment services to support completion of qualification and manage a student survey process detailing satisfaction with the course and subsequent employment outcomes. We monitor and assess them against two KPIs that capture information on successful qualification completions and whether the training resulted in a job outcome.

The department is monitoring the data that they collect and return to us. We have a benchmark for qualification completions of 65 per cent of all enrolled students with a minimum benchmark of 55 per cent of all students to gain an employment benefit as a result of the training.

CHAIR: I call the member for Redlands.

Mr DOWLING: With respect to page 6 of the Service Delivery Statements, what practical outcomes do you expect to deliver through investing \$1 million in the strategic Indigenous partnerships in the VET investment plan?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question because one of the significant issues when we talk about raising productivity—and members will have heard me speak about this before—is that by raising productivity in the state it will lead to more people having qualifications that will enable them to get a job. We have a four year strategy to encourage equitable participation in training by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people to achieve improved economic outcomes.

There is a strategic vocational education and training Indigenous partnership between my department and DATSIMA, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs. The partnership is seeing us both, the two departments, invest up to \$1 million a year over four years in accredited training and assessment services that will improve employment and training outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders. We understand and recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may require additional assistance to participate in training and achieve training outcomes in terms of completion rates and transitions into employment or further study in line with overall community averages. The strategy complements the certificate III and the higher levels skills programs, with most strategy participants accessing the subsidised training through these initiatives. The focus of the strategy is threefold: increasing participation and qualification completions, strengthening communications between stakeholders and providing strategic interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people facing barriers to accessing, participating in or completing accredited training. Importantly, for members of the committee, it is not about providing training that does not lead somewhere for the students. The partnership is strongly focused on identifying the skills

that employers are seeking at a local or regional level and then providing that training for local Indigenous community members. The funding is fully contestable and the target group is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, particularly those disengaged from training and employment and those in remote areas. The funding is up to a maximum of \$400,000 per project depending on the nature of the training and the assistance and the number of participants targeted by the project.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I will now call the member for Redcliffe.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you, Chair. Minister, during the 2012 election campaign the Premier estimated 420,000 jobs would need to be created to reach a four per cent unemployment target. As the employment minister, can you advise how many jobs now need to be created to reach this four per cent target?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. I would refer those particular questions to the Premier or the Treasurer in their estimates. You will not find anything about those statistics in our SDS. In my Department of Employment we have workforce planners we work with, as members have heard today from the Assistant Minister, to make sure that we have the strategies in place to complement those other programs across government and we are absolutely focused on a four per cent unemployment target, but details of things that the Premier said in the election campaign are not the subject of this SDS.

Ms D'ATH: Thank you. Minister, in relation to the overall change to the funding model for TAFE and the contestability and market driven modelling and the view that the training market should be deregulated, do you believe that contestability and deregulation in training should lead to reduced fees in courses?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. I would say that it is not a matter of what I believe, this is an initiative and a national policy that said that training in Australia needed to be reworked and reformed with a view to all states signing up to a national partnership. Everything we are doing in this state is making sure that whilst we work towards progress in the four pillars and the four per cent unemployment rate that we have committed to achieving in six years, is underpinned by the best use of the resources that we have, and this afternoon I have tried to outline to the committee that the funding in terms of the amount for training should be spent, given that it is taxpayers' money, as efficiently and effectively as possible. When it comes to actual fees that are charged by TAFE I would refer the member to the CEO of TAFE because it is about the government setting subsidies in areas that industry has come to us and said this is where you should be providing the courses. But the fees are set by TAFE. We also believe there is an important element of students contributing, notwithstanding that in some cases there may be some difficulty in them being able to do that because of their circumstance, but that it is an important part of the responsibility of students that they have some contribution to their own course and to their own development and their own future. Whether it comes in the form of VET Fee-Help loans for high level qualifications or whether it is in other aspects of the education sector, we want to make sure that we have a safety net for those who cannot afford it, but there is an element when people are accessing taxpayer funding that their needs to be a sense of responsibility, mutual obligation, for students who are coming into the vocational education and training sector just as they do at universities.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, you talk about these changes and the subsidies particularly being driven by the industry. Are you aware that 48 of the 300 subsidised courses are subsidised primary industry courses of which 21 are specifically agriculture based courses? Are these industry driven and that is why you are subsidising these courses?

Mr LANGBROEK: Well, there is a component within the \$615 million where the minister for agriculture and I have worked very closely with the agricultural colleges at Longreach and Emerald. I think the member for Condamine would be prepared to acknowledge that we have actually sat there, the director-general and I as well at Emerald, speaking to the executives, the boards of those particular organisations, saying if industry wants qualifications in agriculture we need to make sure that they need to be specific courses that lead to a certificate III and they are the things that we have tasked those boards with, making sure that industry are telling us what they want to have in terms of qualifications in agriculture, and that is why we have provided that subsidy for those agricultural colleges.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, can I ask how does that balance with the Annual Skills Priority Report of 2014 where it actually shows that agriculture, forestry and fishing, as far as employment growth by industry between 2013-14 through to 2018-19, is projected to be one per cent in Queensland? Employment growth is only one per cent between now and 2018-19 yet you have chosen to give priority in subsidising 48 courses in that area.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I thank the honourable member for the question. The answer is obviously that the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has responsibility for those particular ag colleges. The member for Condamine has certainly been very passionate about these. We want to make sure that we do as much as we can to help this sector but we have also said that this is something we need to see some results from and we need to see industry coming to us. The number of courses just reflects the diversity of things that happen in the agriculture sector. The fact is that it is more about the quantum. I think if you look at the quantum, and I am happy to provide that as part of—I think it might be \$7 million that we are providing to the ag colleges over this year. So when we look at that particular quantum as a proportion of \$615 million—yes, it is \$7.236 million and that is just over one per cent of the \$615 million which is the total quantum given as part of the VET investment plan.

Ms D'ATH: Minister, we talked about the 500 courses offered by TAFE that are not subsidised. Is it possible to get a list of those courses that have been released—the 300 that are subsidised?

Mr LANGBROEK: As I say, TAFE is a statutory body and I would have thought—well, I will let the CEO answer that.

Ms Schmidt: Our prices are available online on our websites for students both in terms of government subsidised arrangements and full fee-for-service arrangements, but I am happy to provide, after this session, a price list to the member—I don't know whether it is part of the estimates process—in its totality.

CHAIR: Minister, are you happy for the CEO to supply a price list?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am certainly happy, Madam Chair.

CHAIR: I will call the member for Condamine who has a question.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, with this restructure of TAFE and what we have discussed today and what the committee has looked at over the last few months, there will no doubt be some sales of assets within TAFE. Will that money go into consolidated revenue?

Mr PUCCI: Point of order, Madam Chair. The member is assuming that there is going to be sales of assets.

Mr LANGBROEK: May I say I am happy to answer, because those matters are within QTAMA, honourable member. The honourable Tim Mander is the minister responsible. What we said to TAFE when we outsourced them was we would like you to focus on teaching and training, we do not want you to have to worry about managing your assets, and to that end we set up the Queensland Training Assets Management Authority, and that is under the auspices of the honourable Tim Mander. Allowing for the fact that we have financed about \$40 million to \$50 million for TAFE to be able to stay in their facilities, and that is something that had to be resolved over the last few months to make sure they have access to their facilities for which they are paying rent and we are subsidising that, but over time questions like that need to be addressed to Tim Mander.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Member for Redcliffe, do you have further questions?

Ms D'ATH: Based on your answer, minister, in relation to rent, and I don't know if this is a question to yourself or maybe directly to TAFE Queensland, but what negotiations will go on with QTAMA to calculate what the commercial rate is going to be from 1 July 2015 and when will the campuses know about those rent increases?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to take the first part and then happy for the CEO to expand as well. What we want to do is make sure that we support the public provider. By taking away the infrastructure and saying, well, you are still going to have access but we also want to allow prospectively third-party access, we have given a subsidy that is going to last for a particular length of time, and we want to make sure that TAFE is supported in that role, and then any changes to any of those particular aspects of TAFE infrastructure will happen only after consultation between the minister and me as the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, but can you expand on the specific detail. I think it is \$42 million or something.

Ms SCHMIDT: Sure I can, minister. Rent negotiations have been more about establishing QTAMA in 2014-15 and a notional amount, the amount that the minister has said is the amount that we will transfer between parties in that time, but it is subsidised by government for TAFE Queensland. The agreement on establishing commercial rents will go through a process that will be transparent and we have signed a memorandum of understanding between TAFE Queensland and QTAMA that

will set the basis of that, including that TAFE will not be disadvantaged at least in the first two years to ensure that we have access to the campuses that we need to in order to deliver to our students. From there valuations have started to take place in terms of what the market rent would be and a transparent process around alternative occupation. In fact, this is something we do on an ongoing basis. Working with third parties on TAFE campuses to deliver outcomes will ensue, where QTAMA will be added to that process as the owner of the facilities. We expect that to take the next 12 months to take its most full form, and in 2015-16 and beyond we expect there will be a transition out process that ensues thereafter.

Ms D'ATH: Ms Schmidt, can I ask, in relation to a stocktake of the assets and the valuations, does that include the actual assets within the buildings, including equipment that has been donated over the years by private businesses?

Ms Schmidt: All of the equipment inside the assets is being accounted for, yes.

Ms D'ATH: And will TAFE have to pay rent to QTAMA that will include equipment that the taxpayer never paid for that was provided to the TAFE for free? Will they now have to pay rent to use their own equipment?

Ms Schmidt: I expect not. For the ease of the transfer, the assets were transferred to QTAMA in their entirety. That MOU that I referred to before puts in place the conditions by which we will stocktake in full. Ownership of the equipment that is agreed between QTAMA and TAFE will transfer back to TAFE in, I expect, the first three to six months of the operating year 2014-15. So, it is about understanding that you are talking about 100,000-odd pieces of equipment, and how we divide those in terms of ownership is yet to be confirmed. What we have assurance of is that TAFE Queensland will not be disadvantaged in its ability to continue to deliver. And I am comfortable as the CEO that that is a basis by which we can continue to deliver our business.

Ms D'ATH: So QTAMA will decide what is a training asset under its authority?

Ms Schmidt: I expect we will do that through learning together. We are talking about establishing a completely new concept in terms of the way in which we use our equipment to date, and it will lead to both greater efficiency of our use of equipment and utilisation of that equipment and a better outcome overall in terms of investment in those types of items.

CHAIR: Thank you. The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Training and Employment has expired. Minister, on behalf of the committee could I particularly thank you, the Assistant Minister, Ms Rice, the Director-General, Mr Rider, Ms Jodi Schmidt and the departmental officers for your attendance and for informing our examination of the proposed appropriation. Your responses to any questions taken on notice are due with the committee secretariat by 5 pm on Thursday, 17 July 2014, although I do appreciate that many of those responses have already been supplied.

In conclusion, on behalf of the committee I thank all of the Parliamentary Service staff who have supported the hearing today for their assistance. The committee will hold its second and final estimates hearing for 2014 on Thursday, 17 July when we will examine the estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Our report on the estimates for both portfolios is to be tabled on 1 August 2014

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I also pass on my thanks to everyone involved today for the tone in which the hearing has been held. I want to make one clarification that has just been brought to my attention and that was in answer I think to the question from the member for Condamine about the five former school sites. It has been brought to my attention the former Charlton State School, which I believe is in the member's electorate. Departments between themselves can sometimes express the first desire to get a government owned site as we have done in other areas as departments look to dispose of some of their sites. I can advise that just yesterday the Department of Community Safety have bought the Charlton State School site for \$1.55 million. I just wanted to clarify that for the committee because that has just been brought to my attention and to reassure members that we think that is quite a good result but to advise members of the committee about that.

Can I say in closing again, Madam Chair, thank you for your conduct as chair, and thank you to all members, to the deputy chair, to Neil Laurie and all of the Parliamentary Service for the way that they have coordinated a very big day of parliamentary hearings. As I mentioned at the start, this was six hours of interrogation about the SDS. I would like to think that we and the department were as fulsome as we could be in terms of providing answers in a way that shows that we are absolutely

committed to the best outcomes, as I know we all are as members of parliament. I wish the committee the best with its deliberations over the next couple of days when it does DSITIA with Minister Walker and I want to thank again everyone from my department. As members are aware, and as I know from having sat on that side of the table for eight years, there is a significant amount of work that happens in the department to prepare both me, the Assistant Minister and all of our staff but also it is a great way to get up to speed with what is happening and I would hope, just as those principal round tables that I have done with members opposite are very informing for us as local members, that today's interrogation of the SDS has been also informative across a whole range of issues all the way through from early childhood this morning, right through to training and employment this afternoon, with schools and education in the middle. I thank the director-general and all of my senior staff, as well as Jodi Schmidt and Chris Rider from the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. I again thank everyone for their attendance here today, especially our parliamentary staff and the secretariat. Thanks very much.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I now declare this 2014 estimates hearing of the Education and Innovation Committee closed.

Committee adjourned at 5.02 pm